



GAZETTEER OF INDIA  
UTTAR PRADESH

DISTRICT PITHORAGARH

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# UTTAR PRADESH DISTRICT GAZETTEERS



## PITHORAGARH

**P. C. SAXENA**

**I. A. S.**

**State Editor**

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## PREFACE

In presenting this volume, the eighteenth in the series of revised District Gazetteers of the State of Uttar Pradesh, being published under a scheme jointly sponsored and financed by the Union and the State Governments, it may be mentioned that this is the first gazetteer of the district of Pithoragarh, which was formed into a separate administrative unit out of the tahsil of Pithoragarh, which comprised 30 *pattis* and some other areas (*pattis* Walla Athigaon and Palla Athigaon) of the Almora district, by government notification 908/IC, dated February 24, 1960. It is thus an altogether new book and closely follows the pattern approved by the Government of India.

Among sources, which have served to a considerable extent as the principal bases for this gazetteer, may be mentioned Batten's *Official Reports on the Province of Kumaun and Statistics of Kumaun*, (both published from Agra in 1851), the various Settlement reports of the region, E. T. Atkinson's *The Himalayan Districts of the North-Western Provinces of India*, in three volumes (Allahabad, 1882-86), H. G. Walton's *Almora : A Gazetteer* (Vol. XXXV of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Allahabad, 1911) and its supplementary volumes B, C and D, published in the second, third and fourth decades of this century and the decennial census reports and district census handbooks. Other sources including relevant information and data obtained from official and non-official agencies in the district and outside have also been utilised in preparing this gazetteer.

I should like to express my thanks to the chairman and members of the State Advisory Board, to Dr P. N. Chopra, Editor, Indian Gazetteers, Central Gazetteers Unit, Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi and to all those officials and non-officials who have helped in various ways in bringing out this gazetteer.

LUCKNOW :

PRAKASH CHANDRA SAXENA

Dated June 30, 1971

## FOREWORD

The material for drafting the first District Gazetteer of Pithoragarh was collected and compiled till 1967 when its drafting was completed and it was sent to the Press thereafter. But for certain unavoidable reasons its publication was delayed. The State and the Central Governments finally cleared it for publication towards the end of 1976.

Since then the district witnessed two important events—the census of 1971 and the transfer of tahsil Champawat to the district from that of Almora in 1972—none of which could be touched upon in the present draft.

In 1971 the population of the district was 3,13,747, percentage variation from 1901 to 1971 was 140·4, position in the State in respect of population was 52nd, density of population was 32 persons per sq. km., females outnumbered the males by 5,151 and the proportion between the sexes was 1,033 females per 1,000 males. In 1972, vide notification No. 5-2(5) 70-1-5(107) dated May 3, 1972, Champawat tahsil was added to the district which now comprises the southern part of this district. This has increased the population of the district by 1,01,416 persons (including 26,639 females) the area about 1,560 sq. km. and the number of villages by 656. Tahsil Champawat also includes certain places of interest like Barakot, Champawat, Devidhura, Lohaghat and Puniagiri, a detailed description of which will be found in the revised District Gazetteer of Almora. The present draft will be made up-to-date in the supplementary volume which will be taken out in due course.

The observations of the State and the Central Governments received during this period from time to time necessitated re-editing of the complete draft which was done during the period of my predecessor Sri D. P. Varun.

LUCKNOW :  
November 16, 1978

Dr PARMANAND MISHRA  
State Editor

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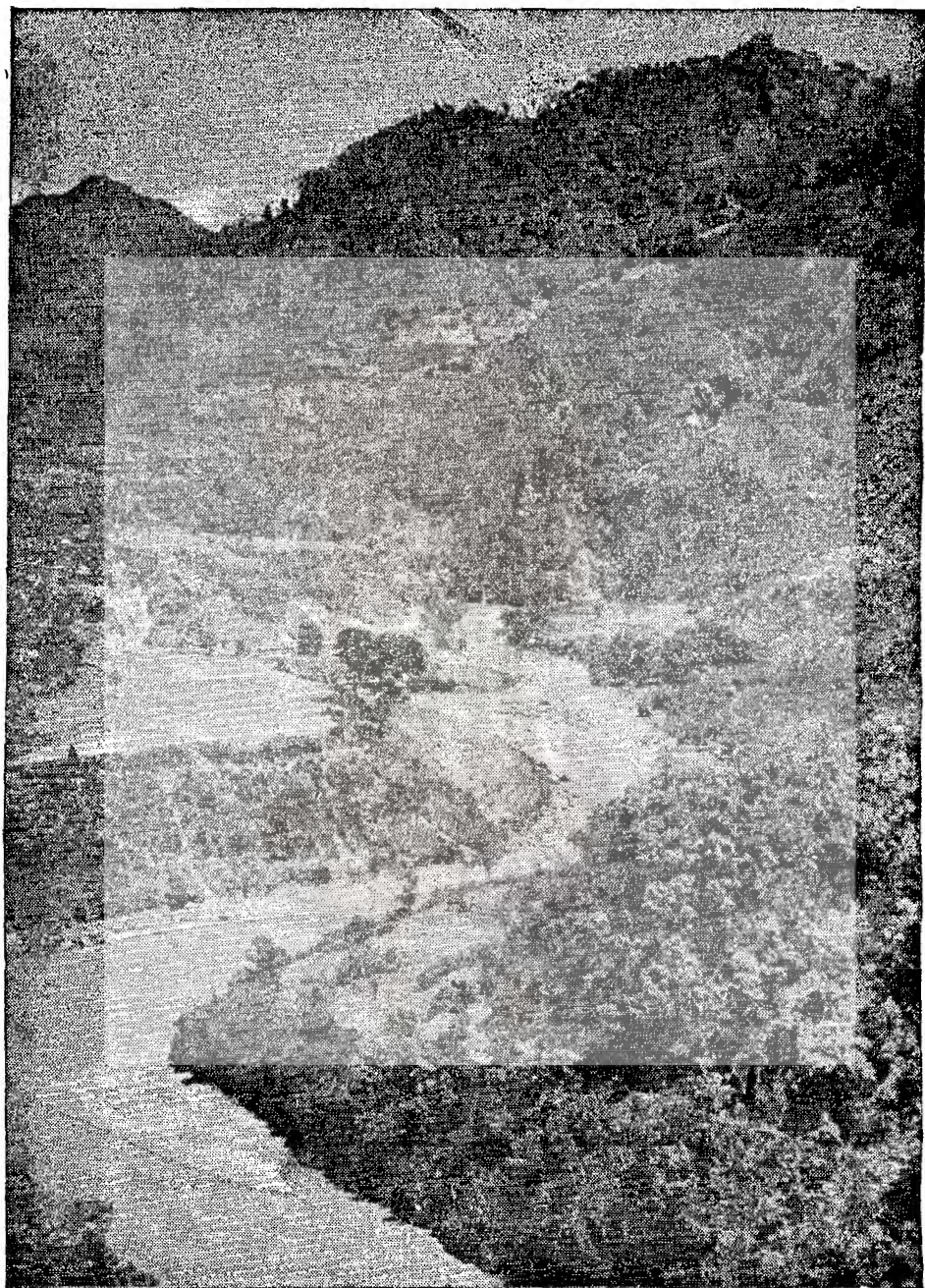
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**Valley of Kali River, Pithoragarh**

## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL

#### Origin of Name of District

The district is named after its headquarters town, Pithoragarh. Tradition has it that during the reign of the Chand rajas of Kumaon, one Piru, also called Prithvi Gosain, built a fort here and named it Prithvigarh which, in course of time, got changed into Pithoragarh. According to another local legend, Pithora, a Gurkha raja, constructed a fort here and called the place Pithoragarh.

#### Location, Boundaries, Area and Population

**Location and Boundaries**—The district forms the north-eastern part of the Kumaon Division and lies between Lat. 29°27' N. and 30°49' N. and Long. 79°50' E. and 81°3' E., the length from north to south, being about 151 km. at its maximum, and the breadth from east to west, reaching its maximum at about 119 km. It is bounded by Tibet on the north, Nepal on the east, district Almora on the south and the districts Almora and Chamoli on the west.

**Area**—According to the Central Statistical Organisation, the district had an area of 7,242 sq. km. in 1961 and in size occupied the tenth position in the State.

**Population**—According to the census of 1961, the population of the district was 2,63,579 (females being 1,35,287).

#### History of District as Administrative Unit

With a view to meet the felt needs of the residents of the northern borders of the State for comprehensive development of the area, the State government created the Uttarakhand Division comprising districts Chamoli, Pithoragarh and Uttarkashi in 1960. District Pithoragarh was constituted on February 24, 1960 with 32 *pattis*—30 *pattis* from tahsil Pithoragarh and two *pattis* from tahsil Almora. In December 1968, the district was included in the Kumaon Division which was reorganised to comprise districts Naini Tal, Almora and Pithoragarh.



### Subdivisions, Tahsils and Thanas

The district has been divided into four subdivisions : Dharchula, Didihat, Mansyari and Pithoragarh, each forming a single tahsil of the same name.

Triangular in shape, Dharchula, the north-eastern tahsil of the district, is bounded on the north-east by the water-parting ridge which separates it from Tibet; on the south-east and east by the Kali river which separates it from Nepal; on the west by the Panch Chulhi range which divides it from tahsils Didihat and Mansyari. The tahsil consists of five *pattis*. Its population was 32,566 (females, 15,753).

Tahsil Didihat is bounded, on the north by tahsil Mansyari, on the east by tahsil Dharchula and the river Kali which separates it from Nepal on the south and west by tahsil Pithoragarh and on the north-west by district Almora. It consists of nine *pattis*. Its population was 96,518 (females, 50,452).

Mansyari, the north-western tahsil of the district, is bounded by Tibet on the north, tahsil Dharchula on the east, tahsils Dharchula and Didihat on the south and districts Chamoli and Almora on the west. It consists of 3 *pattis*. Its population was 30,377 (females, 14,992).

Tahsil Pithoragarh, forming the south-western part of the district, is bounded on the north by district Almora and tahsil Didihat, on the east by the Kali river which separates it from Nepal, on the south and west by the Sarju river which divides it from district Almora. It consists of 15 *pattis*. Its population was 1,04,118 (females, 54,090).

**Police-station**—For purposes of police administration there are four police-stations in the district, one at each tahsil headquarters. Each of the 32 *pattis* of the district is a revenue police circle.

### GEOLOGY

The district lies in the Himalayas which are the youngest mountains in the world and the land mass now covered by them was occupied by the great geosynclinal Tethys sea during the Mesozoic period. The probable date of commencement of the elevation of the Himalayas is about the close of the Mesozoic period.

According to geological formations of the district, it may be divided into four broad belts, viz., (1) the innermost Siwalik hill ranges, (2) the lesser and middle Himalayas, (3) the inner Himalayas



**A View of Panch Chulhi from Mansyari**



and (4) the thin belt bordering the Tibetan Himalayas, roughly tending east-south-east.

The belt of the innermost hill ranges of the Siwalik group lies in the southern part of the district. In the rock formations here sandstones alternate with clayey shales. The sandstones are dirty, friable and micaceous and are, therefore, unsuitable for the building, ballast and industry.

The second belt, comprising the ranges of the lesser and middle Himalayas, extends north of the Siwalik group to Dharchula. It contains sedimentary and low to medium grade metamorphic rocks such as limestone, slate, quartzite, phyllite and mica-garnet schist. Mineralization of copper, magnesite, soap-stone, etc., is known to occur in this belt.

The third belt, containing higher ranges of the inner Himalayas, is wholly composed of crystalline metamorphic rocks such as mica and garnet schists, kyanite and sillimanite schists, gneisses, granulites and quartzites. This belt is very little known geologically. The belt extends from near Dharchula to Garbyang.

The fourth belt, bordering the Tibetan Himalayas has an average width of about 7 km. It contains marine sedimentary rocks such as quartzites, fossiliferous limestones and shale.

### Minerals

A number of minerals are found in the district, and brief notes about them are given in the following paragraphs.

**Copper**—The region around the town of Pithoragarh has been one of the important centres of copper mining in the past. The remnants of old copper mines which collapsed long ago are found at Agar Barabisi and south of Askot. Such a mine is also reported to have existed below Pithoragarh town where there is now a natural spring, of which the water has a metallic taste. These mines were abandoned due to the poor quality of ore and difficult mining conditions. Copper ore is found to occur as disseminations in crystalline dolomites and as segregations in quartz veins traversing the former. Chalcopyrite, tetrahedrite, cuprite and malachite are said to have been found in the mine. South of village Askot malachite is commonly found staining the country rock, which is also traversed by quartz veins bearing galena, pyrite, arsenopyrite and chalcopyrite. Chalcopyrite specks and clusters up to 4 cm. in length have been

found at Bora-Agar in a band of crystalline dolomite extending for about 1,209 m. Associated minerals are cuprite, tetrahedrite and malachite. Chalcopyrite along with malachite and azurite, disseminated in quartz stringers and also in crystalline dolomite, occurs near Dewal Thal.

**Magnesite**—Several scattered deposits of magnesite are found in the area around Pithoragarh. They are associated with the dolomite limestone. Very little work has been done on these deposits. Extensive deposits of the mineral occur at several scattered localities in the neighbourhood of Dewal Thal. Some of the more promising ones being located at Dewal Thal, Chandag, Phadyari and Satsilang. Other promising deposits occur at Osail, Bevalthal, Harali, Pathrauli, Ramkot, Bunga, Chhina and Masum Bheo. Between Tong and Dhurai in Rani Agar occur two promising zones of crystalline magnesite which extend for almost a kilometre. The deposits in the northern zone are about 23 m. and in the southern about 60 m. in thickness.

**Soapstone**—Several small deposits of soapstone occur in association with magnesite at Dewal Thal and Chandag.

**Arsenic**—Orpiment deposits exist near Mansyari. Both orpiment and realgar are reported to be available in scattered fragments on the moraines of the Shunkalpa glacier. The ore had probably come down from the hill face immediately above.

**Sulphur**—This mineral is found in the bed of the Ramganga (eastern) and in tahsil Mansyari.

**Kyanite**—At Girgaon (south of Malpa) there is a thin layer of blue scaly kyanite, the rocks also bearing sericite quartzite.

**Graphite**—Graphitoid pigmentation in schistose rocks is found near villages Sobala and Dar in the Dhauli valley and north of Sirdang in the Kali valley.

**Slate**—Slate quarries exist throughout the district and it is utilised locally for building purposes.

**Limestone**—Though vast reserves of limestone exist in the district, they are dolomite and appear to be fit only for ballast.

#### CLIMATE

The elevation of the district ranges from 500 m. above sea-level in the valleys in the south to over 7000 m. in the snow-bound

Himalayas in the north and north-west. The climate, therefore, largely depends on altitude and varies according to aspect and elevation. Although tropical heat may be experienced in the southern valleys during the summer, the winters are severe. As most of the district is situated on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, monsoon currents penetrate through the deep valleys and rainfall is at the maximum in the monsoon season (June to September), particularly in the southern half of the district. The northern half of the district also gets considerable rain during the winter season which lasts from mid-November to March.

**Rainfall**—Records of rainfall in the district are available for eight rain recording stations which, however, are so located that the records are more properly representative of rainfall in the river valleys. The rainfall generally increases from the south towards the north and owing to the nature of the terrain is highly variable from place to place. Most of it occurs during the monsoon period, being between 75 per cent and 85 per cent of the annual precipitation in the south and between 50 per cent and 70 per cent in the extreme north and north-east. July and August are the rainiest months. In September depressions from the Bay of Bengal occasionally affect the weather and, in association with them, heavy rain may occur causing floods. In the monsoon season there are a few occasions when there are spurts of heavy rain in the hills causing floods in the rivers. The rainfall decreases rapidly after September and is the lowest in November. During winter, from December to March, considerable precipitation occurs in association with the passage of western disturbances across the region, particularly in the northern parts where it is considerably higher than in the rest of the district, being about 20 per cent to 40 per cent of the annual total.

During the fairly long period between 1901 and 1960, for which rainfall data are available for five older stations, the number of years when less than 80 per cent of the annual normal precipitation occurred, was 13 at Askot, 12 at Pithoragarh, 10 at Chaukori, 9 at Berinag and 2 at Dharchula. The number of spells of two consecutive years when such low precipitation was recorded was one each at Pithoragarh and Berinag and two at Chaukori ; the number of spells of three such consecutive years was two at Askot, which also recorded a long spell of low precipitation lasting five years from 1928 to 1932. The heaviest rainfall in 24 hours recorded was 274.3 mm. at Chaukori on June 22, 1916.

**Temperature**—There is no meteorological observatory in the district. The following account of the climate is based mainly on the records of the observations in the neighbouring districts where similar meteorological conditions prevail. Variations in temperature are considerable from place to place and depend upon elevation as well as aspect. As the insolation is intense at high altitudes, in summer temperatures are considerably higher in the open than in the shade. Pools of cold stagnant air in the valleys cause the diurnal range of temperature to be considerable. January is the coldest month with a mean maximum temperature of  $10^{\circ}\text{C}.$  at heights of 2,000 m. above sea-level, the mean minimum temperature being at the freezing point ( $0^{\circ}\text{C}.$ ). Cold waves in the wake of western disturbances often make winter conditions rigorous. With the onset of the monsoon towards the end of June, day temperatures fall by about  $3^{\circ}$  to  $5^{\circ}\text{C}.$  and with its withdrawal towards the third or fourth week of September, day and night temperatures begin to decrease, slowly in the beginning but more rapidly after October till January, which is the coldest month. Temperatures are much lower at higher altitudes towards the north. In association with western disturbances, precipitation at higher altitudes occurs mostly in the form of snow which accumulates considerably in the valleys.

After January, both day and night temperatures begin to rise, rapidly from March to May or June, the last two being the warmest months. The mean daily maximum temperature is about  $25^{\circ}\text{C}.$  at stations 2,000 m. above sea-level,  $15^{\circ}$  to  $18^{\circ}\text{C}.$  at 3,000 m. above sea-level, and still lower at higher elevations. With the incursion of the monsoon current, temperatures fall slightly by about  $3^{\circ}$  to  $5^{\circ}\text{C}.$

**Humidity**—The humidity is highest during the monsoon months and particularly so during the rainiest months of July and August. During the winter months, it increases towards the afternoon at high altitudes.

**Cloudiness**—Skies are heavily clouded during the monsoon months and for short spells when the region is affected by western disturbances. During the rest of the year, the skies are generally clear to lightly clouded.

**Winds**—Owing to the nature of the terrain, local effects are pronounced and when the general prevailing winds are not too strong to mask these effects, there is a tendency for diurnal reversal of winds



which blow up the slopes during the day (anabatic flow) and down the slopes at night (katabatic flow). Katabatic wind can blow with considerable force.

## FLORA

The northern part of the district, comprising the larger portions of tahsils Mansyari and Dharchula, where there are high mountains and ridges, is rocky, blank and covered with perpetual snow. The forests are confined to the river valleys and the southern parts of the district. In 1968, an area of about 2,80,403 hectares or 38.71 per cent of the total area of the district was covered with forests. Of the total forest area tahsil Mansyari contained 1,98,493 hectares, tahsil Didihat 58,832 hectares, tahsil Dharchula 11,555 hectares and tahsil Pithoragarh 11,523 hectares.

Taking into consideration the differences in the altitudes and the climatic conditions which obtain in the district, its flora may be divided into four main divisions—the sal forests, *chir* forests, oak forests and the coniferous forests. The willow and older trees are, however, common everywhere in damp situations. The deodars are introduced plants in the district but have become wild. They are found in the southern part of the district around the temples where they had been planted for many generations, their magnificent groves being seen around Gangolihat in tahsil Pithoragarh.

**Sal Forests**—These forests occur in the southern part of the district and the chief tree, sal, is found up to a height of about 1,220 m. and as far as north as *patti* Malla Askot. On the hills the sal does not attain the height to which it grows in the plains. Other associated trees which also grow in these forests are the haldu, sain, *kharik*, and *tun kharik*, the last two being comparatively less common. The sal logs are chiefly used for building purposes. The *bhyunl*, an extremely useful tree, grows in the valleys and lower hilly slopes and is carefully protected, for its leaves afford excellent fodder for cattle, and the fibres of its young shoots are twisted into ropes. Up to heights of about 900 m., trees common in the plains, viz., the mango, pipal, banyan and, sissoo are very frequently in evidence.

**Chir Forests**—The *chir* is the principal component of forests up to altitudes of about 1,800 m., growing between 500 m., when not unduly exposed to the sun, and 2,200 m. on a south aspect. *Chir* trees are usually found alone, for they appear to have the power of driving away all other vegetation from the tract where they are found.

*Chir* is the staple building timber in the hills, while vast quantities of it are exported in the shape of sleepers. Torches are cut out of the living wood. Resin is also extracted from the tree. Its seeds are eaten.

**Oak Forests**—The principal varieties of oak found in the district are the *banj*, *tilonj* and the *kharsu*, each occupying a more or less distinct altitudinal zone.

*Banj* begins to grow at heights of 1,200 m. above sea-level but its best growth is confined between the altitudes of 1,800 m. and 2,450 m. The tree usually attains no great height. Its wood, being hard and gnarled, is used for agricultural implements and fuel. It has the capacity to establish itself on the highly unfavourable south aspect. *Banj* forests are usually dense on the north aspects but open on the south aspects. The other trees found in these forests are the rhododendron and *ringal* which occurs in clumps rising to about 4 m. to 6 m. and containing as many as one hundred shoots.

Between the altitudes of 2,150 m. and 2,450 m. *tilonj*, is the chief species of the oak forest and between the altitudes of 2,450 m. and 3,550 m. *kharsu* is the dominant tree. The main associated trees of the *tilonj* and *kharsu* forests are the horse-chestnut and the sycamore. The *tilonj* and *kharsu*, the hardier oaks, resemble the *banj* and are used for the same purpose, but they are straighter and less knotted.

**Coniferous Forests**—Between the altitudes of 3,250 m. and 4,000 m. the dominant species are the conifers. The chief species is the *ragha* (Himalayan silver fir) which mainly occurs between the heights of 3,250 m. and 3,550 m. above the sea-level.

It is a tall tree which resembles the cypress at first glance, its branches being short and close. It attains a height of about 45 m. and a girth of about 4 m. The wood is considered to be equal to that of the *chir* but owing to its remote situation is seldom used except for roofing shingles. The blue pine (*chil*), the yew (*thamer*) and the cypress (*surain*) are also found in this region. The cypress sometimes attains an enormous size. The wood is hard, tough and durable and too heavy for floatation by itself. With these forests is found the variegated bush rhododendron with flowers of all colours, pink, purple, blue and pure white. The birch grows up to heights of about 4,000 m. and its stems give the famous *bhurjapatra* or *Bhoj-patra* which in earlier times, was used as writing material before the invention

of paper. Many old manuscripts written on *Bhoj-patra* are still available in the country.

#### FAUNA

**Animal**—The wild animals of the district have greatly declined in number and variety during the past few decades.

Of the animals in the district, the sambur which is the most widely distributed of all the deer tribe is found up to an altitude of about 3,050 m. above sea-level. The sambur of the hills, where it is called the *jarau*, is a stouter and more massive beast than the sambur of the plains and has very heavy horns which are shed during May. The rutting season for the animal is October-November. The *kakar* or barking deer is also met with up to the same height. The musk-deer (*kastura*) is found in the upper ranges from an altitude of 2,400 m. above sea-level to above the limit of the forest but it has now become almost extinct owing to reckless shooting for its valuable perfume-bearing pod. It is about 50 cm. in height and has a brownish grey colour with harsh and brittle hair. It is generally solitary, very active and sure-footed and prefers rocky, precipitous ground. The nilgai is occasionally found at the foot of the hills and, the four-horned antelope, in the lower sal-clothed hills. The goral or Himalayan chamois is found at heights up to 3,350 m. but its usual habitat is between altitudes of 900 m. and 2,750 m. Both sexes have horns, those of the male being about 15 cm. and of the female about 10 cm. in length. They are generally found in herds of three to four animals but the largest male is usually solitary. They affect moderately steep grassy slopes not too thickly covered with pine. The goral is very tenacious of life and will often carry away a lot of load. The *thar* is found in the most precipitous parts of the upper ranges between 2,100 m. and 3,700 m. above sea-level, according to season. Both sexes have horns but those of the female animals are much slighter and shorter. The male *thar* is about a metre in height and carries horns about 40 cm. long. The *jarau*, which also belongs to the goral family, is nearly as large as the *thar*. It inhabits the precipitous rocks clothed with dense forest, and is a very shy, strange and uncouth beast. Its horns are 20 cm. to 25 cm. in length. The bharal or wild blue sheep is rare in the district. It frequents the grassy slopes between the heights of 3,000 m. and 5,000 m.

The tiger found here is different from that found in the plains, being stouter in build and with longer and more furry hair and shorter and thicker tail. The *bagh*, *baghera* or panther is common throughout

the district. It lives upon cattle, goats and sheep and is a bold and blood-thirsty beast. The snow leopard is rare in the tract south of the snowy range but there are generally one or two available on all hills where the bharal is found. The Himalayan black bear is common throughout the district and is generally seen during the rains. The rare red bear is found in the northern part of the district. It feeds on roots, weeds, grasses and even insects, but will also eat the flesh of animals killed by itself. It has also been known to feed on carreon. Its scent is keen but sight and hearing are dull. It hibernates from December to March and is a timid, unaggressive animal. The jackal is found up to a height of 2,150 m. and the wild pig up to that of 3,050 m. Monkeys and langurs are found throughout the district.

**Birds**—The district is very rich in birds. Birds of prey like eagles, hawks, falcons and vultures, are very common. Among game-birds the *lungi* pheasant is found at an altitude of about 3,700 m. and the *monal* pheasant at elevations between 2,400 m. and 3,700 m. The *kokla* or *pokra* is seen between heights of 1,800 m. and 3,700 m. and the *chir* pheasant is found between altitudes of 1,500 m. and 2,400 m. above sea-level. The *kalij* a common pheasant, and black partridge frequent the thick forests up to a height of about 2,400 m. The *chakor* is a very common bird among partridges. The snow partridges are rare. The Himalayan snow cock is found on or near the snowline. Among pigeons, the wood-pigeon and the blue rock-pigeon are common. Flocks of snow-pigeons are also seen in the higher ranges. Duck and teal occasionally rest on the rivers.

**Reptiles**—There are 34 species of snakes which are found in the district, out of which 26 varieties are non-poisonous and 8 poisonous. The cobra is found up to an elevation of 1,800 m. beyond which it is rare. The krait is very common in the low hills and grows to a length of about a metre. Its colour above is deep, lustrous, blue-black, uniform, or streaked and reticulated with white; below, it is white. The wall's krait has a glistening black colour on the back marked with milky white cross lines, formed of smallish oval or round spots. Below it is white, mottled with slate towards the tail. It resembles the common krait in appearance but is larger in size. The king cobra grows up to 2·5 m. in length. *Callaphis Mac Clellandi* is rarely seen here. The nigriventer, which occurs in the sub-tropical belt is venomous but not fatal for the human species. Russell's viper is common up to a height of about 1,800 m. and the *Ancistrodon*





**Python**





**Falcon**

*himalayanus* is the only hill snake which is found above that of 2,500 m.]

Among the non-venomous snakes the python is most notable. It grows to about 10 m., but specimens of over 7 m. are rare. Its rarity in the upper hills has invested the few specimens seen with almost supernatural terror. It is called the *charao* in the hills and superstition attributes to it an enormous size, with a flowing mane of red hair, and the habit of using a large pine tree as a walking stick when descending from the mountains. The *dhaman* which grows to about 2 m. in length is common in the district.

The blood-sucker lizard inspite of its name is perfectly harmless and grows to lengths of between 35 cm. and 40 cm. The leech is particularly active during the rains and prefers oak forests. After a smart shower it appears in myriads, and any barefooted wayfarer is soon made uncomfortably aware of its presence. The bite of the *mora*, a small stinging fly, also causes small painful sores and intense irritation to travellers.

**Fish**—Fish abound in all streams of the district. Among the larger species the *mahaseer* and the *kalabans* are very common. The *gunah* or fresh-water shark inhabits the deeper pools of the Sarju. The trout is rare, but the *chilwa* swarms wherever there is running water. Among the other species found in the district are the *asela*, *rohu* and *garra*. In the latter part of the hot weather, the fish run up the stream to deposit the ova and return in the rainy season, when they are generally caught.

**Game-laws**—The game-laws obtaining in the district are governed by the Wild Birds and Animals Protection Act (Act VIII of 1912), as amended by the Wild Birds and Animals Protection (Uttar Pradesh Amendment) Act, 1934 (Act XIII of 1934), and sub-section (1) (i) of section 26 of the Indian Forest Act (Act XVI of 1927), as amended by the Indian Forest (Uttar Pradesh Amendment) Act, 1965.

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## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY

#### ANCIENT PERIOD

The area covered by the district of Pithoragarh, which is the easternmost of the three districts of the erstwhile Uttarakhand Division and the northernmost of the three districts of the present Kumaon Division, formerly (prior to 1960) formed part of the Almora district and lies in the heart of the snow range of the central Himalayas. According to the *Manasa-khanda* section of the *Skanda Purana* it would seem to lie in the Manasa-khanda, one of the five divisions of the Himalayan region, which is said to have extended from the Kailash mountain in the north to the Bhabhar and Tarai in the south. The *Manasa-khanda* also gives the route to the Mansarowar lake, which passed through this district and on which lay some of the important holy places of this area, like Patal Bhuvaneshwar (tahsil Didihat) where the pilgrim should worship Siva for three days, while observing a complete fast, Baleshwar on the Ramganga, the Paban mountain (tahsil Didihat), the Pataka or Dhaj (Dhwaj) peak (tahsil Pithoragarh), the confluence of the Gori and the Kali (near Askot) where the pilgrim should take a bath, Chaturdanushtra (tahsil Dharchula), Vyasa Ashram (tahsil Dharchula), the source of the Kali, the Kerala or Chhechhala mountain where he should worship Devi, the Puloman peak (on the range dividing Byans from Darma) on the foot of which is the sacred lake Man Talab also called Byankshiti, the Taraka mountain, the confluence of the Tarani and the Sarda where he should take the sacred dip, behold the caves, worship the gods, shave his beard, keep fast and perform *shraddha* (obsequies), and lastly the Gori mountain where the pilgrim passes out of the district and goes direct to the Mansarowar lake.<sup>1</sup>

Kumaon, the popular name of the region in which the district lies, is said to be a corruption of Kurmachala, the name of a mountain standing to the east of Champawat in Almora district, which is said to be associated with the Kurma (tortoise) avatar of Vishnu.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Atkinson, E. T. : *The Himalayan Districts of the North-Western Provinces of India*, Vol. II, pp. 298—323

2. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 506 ; Vol. III, pp. 162-163, 384-385





**A Fossil—Probably this is 50 million years old is called *Blanfordiceras Wallichi* (Gray)**

The Asura (Daitya or Danava) king Hiranyakashipu and his successors down to Banasura are said to have ruled over these Himalayan regions in early times, the Danpur tract of the district being believed to owe its name to the Danavas.<sup>1</sup> These Asuras, etc., do not seem to have been confined to hills and were probably the chief enemies (referred to in Vedic literature as Dasas or Dasyus) of the early Aryans whom the latter had to encounter in their expansion in northern India. When the Aryans were firmly entrenched in the plains, some of their kings, such as Mandhatri, Yayati, Kartavirya Arjuna, Sagara, Raghu and Bharata, appear to have attempted the conquest of the Himalayan country and, in particular, Divodasa and Sudasa, the Tritsu kings of Panchala, are said to have waged a prolonged war against its Asura king Shambara who, it seems, possessed 90 or 99 strong forts which his enemies tried repeatedly to destroy.<sup>2</sup>

The Pandava brothers of the Hastinapur royal family were the next important princes from the plains, who are said to have effected conquest of these parts. They passed the period of their exile here and married local Naga and Rakshasa girls, there being no dearth of legends connecting a number of sites in the district with Bhima and with Arjuna who is said to have fought with Siva disguised as a Kirata in the Darukavana, a forest located in the south-western part of the district. In the Mahabharata War, Ghatotkacha, son of Bhima by his Rakshasa wife, who was probably a Rakshasa chief of these parts, fought on the side of the Pandavas while some of the Kiratas and Hunas, probably also of this region, sided with the Kauravas. Several of the ancient rishis, such as Bhrigu, Sanatkumara, Valmiki, Kapila and Vyasa are also believed to have been associated with this district. Byans is said to have been named after the sage Vyasa who is supposed to have resided on the Kalirong peak near Changru in this *patti*, a place being still pointed out as Vyasa Ashram (hermitage of Vyasa), and Bhrigutunga (a peak in *patti* Bherang) is traditionally associated with the rishi Bhrigu, while the cave of Patal Bhuvaneshwar is believed to have been the abode of many Devarshis and Brahmarshis including the sages mentioned above.<sup>3</sup>

After the abdication of Yudhishtir, Parikshit, the king of Hastinapur, may have held sway over this region, but he was killed in battle

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1. *Ibid.* Vol. II, pp. 277, 318, 322, 506-507; Vol. III, pp. 334-335
  2. Majumdar, R. C. and Pusalker, A.D. (Ed.): *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. I, pp. 249-250, 293-294
  3. Atkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 319-321

by the Nagas who were for this reason driven out of the plains by Janamejaya, his son, and they strengthened their position in the entire Himalayas where they seem to have put an end to whatever authority the Hastinapur kings had been exercising there. The important Naga chiefs of the district were probably Ananta, Takshaka, the great Naga at Bastir, Berinaga, Kedar Kalinaga, Karkotaka Naga and Vasuki, the last five having their strongholds in what are now Mehar, Baraun, Pungraun, Pandegaon and Danpur respectively, where they are still worshipped as Naga godlings.<sup>1</sup>

The district also seems to have been, for a time, the stronghold of the Kiratas, who gave this region the name Kiratamandala and whose surviving remnants are probably the Rajis (also known as Rajyakiratas or Rawats) of Askot, who claim to be the descendants of an aboriginal prince of these parts who had fled with his family to the jungles in order to escape destruction threatened by an usurper.<sup>2</sup> The Khasas had also entrenched themselves in parts of the district and by suppressing gradually all the former inhabitants became the most dominating people, giving the region the name Khasamandala, a number of petty Khasa chiefs probably ruling almost independently here till at least the time of the Mauryas.<sup>3</sup>

The Kiratas and Khasas also find mention in the *Mahabharata* where they are represented as bringing their peculiar presents to the Pandava king Yudhishthir. Four groups of the Kiratas belonging to four different regions have been described there and one of these hailed from the northern slopes of the Himalayas, wore skins and lived on tubers and fruits, which description fits in with the Kiratas of this area and it is very likely that the modern Rajis (Rajyakiratas) are the descendants of those Kiratas of old. The Khasas were a widely spread people and the lands they then inhabited seem to include the mid-Himalayas where this district lies. The adjective *ekasana* used for them has been taken to mean that they were settled as opposed to other wandering tribes, and there is little doubt that the present Khasas of the district are the descendants of those Khasas of old. The Jyohas, another tribe mentioned in the *Mahabharata*, are believed to have been equally well settled in the same region as the Khasas and it has been suggested that the Johar tract of tahsil Mansyari of this district was from very early times occupied by the migrating Jyohas who gave their name to it.

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 281, 315, 320, 321, 373—375

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 363—368

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 375—382

Parvataka and his brother and son were probably the hill chiefs of the Kumaon-Garhwal Himalayas, who helped Chandragupta Maurya in his coup against the last Nanda king of Magadha, about 325 B.C., the imperial Maurya army being also said to have had in it Kirata highlanders.<sup>1</sup> During Asoka's reign a Buddhist mission of five monks is said to have arrived in these Himalayan regions and converted the people here.<sup>2</sup> The Sakas, who entered India in the first century B. C. and are said to have had certain affinities with the Khasas, such as those revealed in the worship of the sun and the erection of a peculiar type of burial mounds, also appear to have reached these parts. A few coins discovered in this area and assigned to the first century A. D. bear the names of Sivadatta, Sivapalita and Haridatta<sup>3</sup>, who may have been the Hinduised Saka satraps of Indo-Scythian or Indo-Parthian kings of north-western India, or local chiefs probably of the Kuninda branch of the Khasas. The Kunindas, who had a republican constitution and seem to have predominated in this region in the early centuries of the Christian era, are probably identical with the Kulindrine tribe mentioned by the geographer Ptolemy (*circa* 150 A. D.).

About the last quarter of the first century A. D., the empire of the Kushanas, a branch of the Sakas, under Kanishka included in it the western and central Himalayas and parts of Tibet, which regions seem to have remained under the sway of his successors for the next hundred years or so,<sup>4</sup> the Kunindas of this region probably becoming their feudatories. Some Kushanas may also have settled down here and Buddhism gained in strength during this period<sup>5</sup>.

The Kunindas are mentioned as being among those who were instrumental in bringing about the downfall of the Kushana empire about the second quarter of the third century A. D.,<sup>6</sup> as a result of which some more Kushanas including a few scions of the royal family are likely to have taken refuge in these parts. Among the refugees, was probably one Vasudeva (not an uncommon name among the later rulers of the Kushana dynasty)<sup>7</sup> who may have been identical with the traditional founder of the well-known early local dynasty, the Katyuri, after the name of which the tract adjoining this district on the

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1. Majumdar and Pusalker, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 57

2. Atkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 409

3. Majumdar and Pusalker, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 161

4. *Ibid.*

5. Atkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 409

6. Majumdar and Pusalker, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 54

7. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 161



south-west came to be called the Katyur valley. The Sakas and Kushanas, who had by this time been completely Hinduised, soon mingled with the local Khasas or Kunindas and the Katyuri, dynasty, probably with a Saka (or Kushana)—Khasa (or Kuninda) origin, thus seems to have come into being about the end of the third century A. D., with its capital at Kartripura or Katyuripura, also known as Karttikeyapura, which name together with the term Katyur being believed to have been derived from the name of the family deity Karttikeya, located near Baijnath in the Katyur valley (Almora district).<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that it was this Kartripura which figures in the list of kingdoms conquered by the Gupta emperor Samudragupta about 350 A.D.<sup>2</sup> and that the Khasa raja of Karttikeyapura whom Chandragupta II killed (about 375 A. D.) in order to avenge his brother's defeat and to rescue his sister-in-law from captivity (as mentioned in Rajasekhara's *Kavyamimamsa*) was none other than the ruler of this Himalayan kingdom. It appears that the bulk of the district of Pithoragarh was under the rule of these early chiefs of the Katyur valley.

In the neighbourhood of the Katyuri kingdom there appears to have existed another kingdom founded probably by some Kshatriyas from the plains, Sukhavanta, one of its early rulers, being said to have invaded the kingdom of Rajapala of the early Garhwal dynasty<sup>3</sup>. One of the two copperplate grants, preserved at Taleshwar (Almora district) and assigned to the sixth century A.D., purports to have been issued in the fifth regnal year of Dyutivarman (entitled *parama-bhattaraka-maharajadhiraja*), the son of Agnivarman, grandson of Vrishavarman and great-grandson of Vishnuvarman I, and the other by Vishnuvarman II (Dyutivarman's son). The family is described as descended both from the moon and the sun and as the Paurava line of kings, and the kingdom as the Parvatakara Rajya (the hill kingdom). Both the characters are stated to have been issued from the city of Brahmapura (apparently the capital in Uttarkashi), in favour of the god Viraneshvara, an avatar of Ananta (probably Sheshanaga),<sup>4</sup> who seems to have been the family deity of these kings and may have been the same as the Berinaga of the Pithoragarh district. A small inscription (found inscribed on a rock near Almora) of about the same period records a pious deed of one Rudresha<sup>5</sup> who

1. Atkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 383, 467—469

2. Majumdar and Pusalker, *op. cit.*, Vol. III pp. 8, 12

3. Atkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 411-412

4. Majumdar and Pusalker, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 123-124

5. *Indian Archaeology* 1960-61—A Review, p. 49

may have been a descendant of Vishnuvarman II. It appears that the kingdom was fairly flourishing and that the power of the Katyuris had for the time being declined, they probably having become feudatories of these Pauravas who exercised sway over the Pithoragarh region as well.

About this time one of the local chiefs of western Tibet, who is said to have been of Indian descent, had set up a powerful kingdom which might have touched the frontiers of India and whose ruler might have had relations with the border states<sup>1</sup>, probably the Brahmapura kingdom or its vassal, the Katyuri, so far as this district is concerned. In 704 A. D., the then Tibetan king lost his life in a campaign against Indian chiefs of the border.<sup>2</sup> The persecution of Buddhists in and the expulsion of Indian monks from Tibet during the period of his successor<sup>3</sup> seem to have led to a number of them taking refuge in this district.

It was probably due to the disorder created by the frequent harassing raids of the Tibetans and, perhaps, a decline in the power and prestige of the kings of Brahmapura that a branch of the Katyuris moved north-westward and established a new kingdom with its capital (also named Karttikeyapura) at or near what is now Joshimath (in Chamoli district).<sup>4</sup> Basantandeva, mentioned in the first of the three grants contained in the Bageshwar stone inscription (Almora district),<sup>5</sup> seems to have been its founder and probably identical with Asantideva's successor Basantideva who figures in the genealogical lists of the Katyuris as being twenty-first (in the Doti list) or thirty-second (in the Askot list) from Shalivahana (the first ruler in the line), while the lists from Pali begin with Asantideva.<sup>6</sup> It is, therefore, likely that towards the close of the 7th century after the death of Basantideva, one of his sons, Katarmalla (of the lists), represented the main line in the Katyur valley and another governed the new principality (in Chamoli district) which, a little later, witnessed a dynastic change resulting in the successive rule of Kharparadeva, Kalyanarajadeva and Tribhuvanarajadeva (known from the second grant in the Bageshwar inscription).

1. Atkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 460-461; Majumdar and Pusalker, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 73, 77, 633

2. *Ibid.*, p. 635

3. *Ibid.*

4. Atkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 382, 449, 457, 467

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 469-470; Majumdar and Pusalker, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 122

6. Atkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 530-532

The last named has been described as friend of a Kirata prince (probably of this district)<sup>1</sup>. This line seems to have succeeded in reducing the parent principality of the Katyur valley to a subordinate status and in extending its sway over parts of the Pithoragarh district. The third grant (incorporated in that inscription) together with the two copperplate grants from Pandukeshwar (Chamoli district) shows that this dynasty was succeeded by another, the four successive rulers (assigned to *circa* 790—900 A.D.) of which were Nimbara, Ishtaganadeva, Lalitashuradeva and Bhudeva, the last three of whom had imperial titles and were powerful monarchs who ruled over an extensive territory<sup>2</sup>, including in all probability this district. This dynasty in its turn was succeeded by yet another, the successive rulers of which were Salonaditya, Ichchhatadeva, Deshatadeva, Padmatadeva and Subhiksharajadeva<sup>3</sup> and which seems to have lasted till about the beginning of the 11th century and to have enjoyed the same imperial authority as its predecessor in so far as this district is concerned.

The Katyur valley branch was continued by Katarmalla's descendants who appear to have continued governing directly parts of Pithoragarh and Almora districts and a tract (in Nepal) along the left bank of the Kali as feudatories of the imperial Katyuris of Joshimath but to have begun asserting their independence as the latter grew weaker during the later half of the 11th century. In this dynasty, Dhamadeva (12th in descent from Katarmalla) and Brahmadeva, his successor, are said to have been weak rulers and it was probably in the time of the latter that the Joshimath branch of the Katyuris under Viradeva migrated back to the Katyur valley. Viradeva was a tyrant who probably ousted Brahmadeva and exasperated the people by his incompetance and tyrannical ways to the extent that they were forced to take his life<sup>4</sup>. Trilokapala, Brahmadeva's son and successor, seems to have tried to restore order in the kingdom but dissensions broke out among the members of the family and every man of royal blood seized a portion of the kingdom for himself. It appears that Doti (across the Kali, in Nepal) and Askot, Sira (Shera or Shira), Shor and Gangoli (all in Pithoragarh district) had been the divisional headquarters where persons of the royal family governed as hereditary viceroys who now became almost independent of the central authority.<sup>5</sup>

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 470; Majumdar and Pusalkor, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 122

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123

3. *Ibid.*, p. 123; Atkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 471-472

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 467-468, 493-494

5. *Ibid.*, p. 494

The first to rise in power seems to have been the Doti branch which very soon extended its sway over the Askot, Shor, Darma and Johar tracts which comprise the bulk of this district.<sup>1</sup>

The Chand dynasty, which was destined later to reunite the whole of Kumaon under one ruler, seems to have been founded about the middle of the 10th century. According to the traditional account, Brahmadeva, a scion of the house of Doti, had established himself at Sui in Kali Kumaon (pargana Champawat, Almora district). He was, however, a weak ruler, was opposed by the Rawat raja of Domkot and was unable to suppress the factions among his own people who, therefore, invited Som Chand, a Chandravansi Rajput prince from Jhusi (near Allahabad). The raja of Sui readily took to him, gave to him his daughter in marriage and with her as dowry 15 *bisi* (approximately acres) of land on which Som Chand built his fort, called Rajbunga, which later came to be known as Champawat.<sup>2</sup> The date of Som Chand's accession is differently given as 685 A.D., or 700 A.D., or 1178 A.D., but on the basis of a careful examination of the various traditions, the different versions of the Chand genealogy and the epigraphical records of the dynasty, it has been suggested that the most probable date would be 953 A.D.<sup>3</sup>

Som Chand (*circa* 953-974) is credited with subduing the Rawat raja, pacifying the rival factions among his people, inviting several families of Joshis, Pandes and Bishts from the plains and appointing them to important offices in the state, reviewing village rights and constitution, reviving the ancient system of village headmen and subdividing the country into *pattis*, placing each under a semi-independent ruler. He thus brought his territory, which seems to have included the south-eastern parts of Pithoragarh district, into a semblance of order, although he was still a feudatory of the maharaja of Doti, like many of his descendants.<sup>4</sup> Nothing is known about the first six of them except their names and that Indra Chand (Som Chand's great-grandson) was the first to import silkworm (probably from China through Tibet or Nepal) into Kumaon and to introduce the manufacture of silk there.<sup>5</sup>

Bina Chand (8th in the line of succession), who was a weak ruler and had allowed affairs of state to fall into the hands of unscrupulous

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 496

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 497-498

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 499-503

4. *Ibid.*, p. 508

5. *Ibid.*, p. 509



servants, died childless. The event proved to be a signal for a widespread revolt of the Khasa population, the situation being exploited by the Chands' formidable rivals, the Khasa Rawats of Domkot probably under Jaipal (1026—42), or Sainpal (1042—54), his successor, who figure in the list of the 15 Khasa rajas known to have flourished between 869 A.D. and 1067 A.D.<sup>1</sup> The surviving members of the Chand family took refuge in the Tarai. But when wearied by the new order of things, the people invited Bir Chand (a descendant of Sansar Chand, the fifth raja of the Chand dynasty) and all those who were dissatisfied with the rule of the Khasas rallied around him and joined in an attack on Kali Kumaon, Sainpal (the Khasa raja) was killed and Bir Chand restored to his ancestral kingdom of Champawat, probably in 1054. His reign lasted till 1080.<sup>2</sup> Indra (1054—67), Sainpal's successor, appears to have fled to Danpur, a stronghold of the Khasas from where their chiefs seem to have continued to rule parts of this district till, a few centuries later, they were eliminated by the Chands. After Bir Chand, in the Chand dynasty, eight rajas ruled one after the other till about the close of the 12th century, the last two being Nar Chand (1170—77) and Nanki Chand (1177—95).

Thus during the 11th and 12th centuries, the area covered by the present district of Pithoragarh appears to have been divided among the Katyuri chiefs of Askot, Sira, Shor, Gangoli and Baijnath, the Khasa Thakurs of Danpur and Darma and the Chands of Champawat, all of whom were probably subordinate to the maharajas of Doti.

It was probably this weakened and divided condition of the country which tempted Aneka Malla to invade Kumaon and Garhwal in 1191 A. D. He appears to have crossed the river Kali, somewhere in the Pithoragarh district, and after overrunning it, to have halted for some time at Gopeshwar (in Chamoli district) where he got an inscription engraved on a big trident. Aneka Malla's conquest of and stay in Kumaon and Garhwal seem to have been, however, short-lived.<sup>3</sup> At that time the Chand raja of Champawat was probably Nanki Chand who is, according to one genealogical list of the dynasty, assigned to 1177—1191 A.D.<sup>4</sup>

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 502, 507, 509—511

2. *Ibid.*, p. 519

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 511—515

4. *Ibid.*, p. 500

## MEDIÆVAL PERIOD

Some thirty-two years later, in 1223 A. D. (Saka 1145), Krachalla Deva invaded Kumaon, as is evident from a copperplate grant issued in the 16th year of his reign, corresponding to 1223 A. D., and inscribed on the back of an older Katyuri record preserved at Baleshwar (Almora district). According to this inscription, Krachalla Deva granted some lands to the Brahmana priests of the god Baleshwar, in order to mark his conquest of this region. The king was apparently a Buddhist, although he seems to have been tolerant enough to make the grant in favour of a Saiva shrine. The record also mentions the names of ten local chieftains, some under the title of 'raja' and others under that of *mandalikas* (heads of circles—administrative subdivisions), who seem to have been subjugated and subordinated by him. Three of these feudal lords bear names ending in 'Chand', namely Shri Chand, Vinaya Chand and Vadya Chand, and are all styled as *mandalikas*.<sup>1</sup> They may well have been Chandravanshi Rajput princes belonging to the Chand family of Champawat.<sup>2</sup> But as none of these names appears in the extant genealogical lists of the dynasty, they do not seem to have been the reigning rajas, the throne being occupied at that time probably by Bhikam Chand who ruled in 1205—1226 A.D.<sup>3</sup> It is likely that finding himself helpless in the face of the advancing forces of Krachalla Deva he abandoned his kingdom and fled to the Bhabar or Tarai. The other local chiefs mentioned in the grant seem to have been of the Katyuri and Khasa stocks. Krachalla Deva's conquest of and stay in the region appear to have been equally short-lived.

According to the traditional account of the house of Askot, one Abhaipal, son of Trilokpal, came from Katyur and founded this branch some time in the 13th century. Its rulers were called Rajwars. Niranjandeva, another son of Trilokpal, had set up himself in Doti, with the title of Rainka, and it appears that, like other petty chiefs of upper Kumaon, the Rajwars of Askot also owed allegiance to the Rainka rajas of Doti. Later, when the power of Doti declined leading to the rise of the Chands, the Rajwars accepted the latter's suzerainty. The Askot family claims descent from the main Katyuri line in the genealogy of which Abhaipal's father Trilokpal stands 48th in direct descent from Shalivahana, the founder of the line. With Abhaipal begins the genealogy of the Askot Rajwars, and it comes

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 516—519

2. *Ibid.*, p. 503

3. *Ibid.*, p. 500

down to Pushkarpal.<sup>1</sup> This list gives 56 names whereas another list of the same dynasty gives only 25 names beginning from Abhaipal and ending with Mahendrapal II. In this list the two names following Mahendrapal II are Himmatpal and Daljitpal, which are also different from those given in the first list.<sup>2</sup> Pushkarpal's successors were probably Gajendrapal, Bhupendrapal and Vikrampal.

Karamchand is said to have been the first important Mankoti raja of Gangoli. It is said, he fell out with his minister, an Upreti Brahmana, and in consequence was murdered by the minister's followers when he was out on a hunting expedition, Gangoli being the most noted haunt of tigers in Kumaon. The minister sent word to the rani (Karamchand's wife) that the raja was killed by a tiger, but she suspected foul play, cursed the region, saying "since the raja has been killed by a tiger, men shall ever be killed by tigers in Gangoli", and immolated herself. The Pantis were formidable rivals of the Upretis and ultimately succeeded in the struggle for power that had ensued between these two factions. They placed Sitalchand, the son of Karamchand, on the throne of Mankot (near Gangolihat in tahsil Pithoragarh). Sitalchand was followed by Brahmchand, Hingulechand, Punipchand, Anichand and Narayanchand, who appear to have ruled one after the other.<sup>3</sup> Jahnavi Naula, an old well at Gangolihat, the building of which is attributed to these Mankoti or Gangoli rajas, bears an inscription dated 1264 A.D. but the names of the raja or rajas mentioned in it are not decipherable except for one Samati.<sup>4</sup> Another inscription discovered at Baijnath (in the Katyur valley) and dated 1352 A.D., mentions the name of three Gangola rajas—Hamiradeva, Lingarajadeva and Dharaladeva—who regilt the spire of the Lakshminarayan temple of that place.<sup>5</sup> An image inscription discovered in another temple at Baijnath, records that in 1365 A. D. a pious lady named Subhadra, who was the wife of Kalhana Pandit, fulfilled a vow in the kingdom of the raja Hamiradeva.<sup>6</sup> This Raja seems to be identical with his namesake in the record of 1352.

The Sira tract (in tahsil Didihat) appears to have been a sort of viceroyalty of the maharajas of Doti and, it is said, they used to

1. Atkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 531

2. *Ibid.*, p. 532

3. *Ibid.*, p. 540

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 540-541

come here during the winter months in order to enjoy the sun. Their chief stronghold here was Siragarh or Sirakot, situated on the hill Digtar Pata, where the Rainka rajas of Sira used to reside as viceroys of the rulers of Doti. The lineage of these rajas of Sira contains 22 names—Adhi Rawat, Bhishma Rawat, Bhakti Rawat, Dhira Malla, Jagati Malla, Kuru Pala, Ripu Malla, Bhupati Malla, Bharati Malla, Data Malla, Ananda Malla, Raj Malla, Kalyan Malla, Jurban Malla, Arjuna Malla, Naga Malla, Bali Narayan Malla, Dungara Basera, Madan Singh Basera, Rai Singh Basera, Sobha Malla and Hari Malla. Of these Bali Narayan Malla was expelled by a Khasiya chief whose descendents, the Baseras, ruled for three generations. Of the others, several names are common with those in the genealogy of the Rainka maharajas of Doti while others were cadets of the same house.<sup>1</sup>

The family that ruled over Shor (tahsil Pithoragarh) was known as the Bam (Brahma or Varma) dynasty. In the beginning, Shor was also a dependency of Doti. The names of the Bam rajas, which are known, are Karakil Bam, Kakil Bam, Chandra Bam, Harka Bam, Ani Bam, Sagti Bam, Vijaya Bam and Hari Bam. Their officials were drawn from the Patani, Punetha, Bhat, Upadhya, Joshi, Upreti and Pande subdivisions of the Brahmanas. The capital was located at Udaipur near Pithoragarh and during winter the rajas used to retire to Rameshwar and Bailorkol (in *patti* Rawal) for the sun. A curious story is current about one Jainda Kiral who was appointed settlement officer by one of the Bam rajas. This officer is said to have measured the cultivated and culturable land of the kingdom and assessed each plot according to its value, recording the demand against every cultivator. Instead of thanks, poor Jainda Kiral won the extreme displeasure of the people and made many enemies who were on the lookout for some opportunity which would bring about his discomfiture. Consequently, when once he was sent by the raja to some distant part of the kingdom in order to reduce some refractory villages to submission, his enemies at home made current the rumour that the officer had been killed in the battle. Moreover, they persuaded his wife to become sati and burn with herself all the settlement papers of her husband. The nefarious plan was successful and all the precious records so laboriously collected and compiled by Jainda Kiral were burnt to ashes and thus entirely lost to posterity<sup>2</sup>.

The period of confusion, anarchy and disintegration which had followed Krachalla Deva's temporary conquest and occupation of

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 553

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 532-533



Kumaon (in 1223 A.D.) gradually came to an end and the Chand rajas of Champawat were perhaps the first to recover their kingdom and power. They seem to have fully exploited the situation and it was Thohar Chand (1261—1275 A.D.)<sup>1</sup> who was the first Chand raja to attain to more than local importance and to start the dynasty on its career of expansion and ultimate domination of the entire Kumaon region. One tradition makes him out a duplicate of Som Chand, the founder of the dynasty, who is also, like the latter, reported to have hailed from Jhusi.<sup>2</sup> It shows that probably he was not a direct descendant of the previous Chand raja.

The rajas who followed Thohar Chand in succession are said to have been Kalyan Chand (*circa* 1275—96), Triloki Chand (*c.* 1296—1303), Damora Chand (*c.* 1303—1321), Dharma Chand (*c.* 1321—1344) and Abhai Chand (*c.* 1344—74). Little is known about the reigns of these rulers.<sup>3</sup>

The next Chand raja was Garur Gyan Chand (*circa* 1374—1419) whose reign was quite eventful and important in several ways. It was during this time that Kumaon figured for the first time in Muslim chronicles. It is said that Kharju, the Katehriya raja who had killed a Muslim officer of Budaun, when pressed by the armies of Firuz Tughluq (1351—88 A.D.), the sultan of Delhi, took refuge in Kumaon in 1380 A.D.<sup>4</sup> The sultan's officers led raiding expeditions, almost every year, against the Hindus of Katehr, which must have brought both these parties in contact with the people of Kumaon. It also appears likely that as the Katehriyas were gradually giving way before the Muslims and pressing back towards the hills they must have encroached upon the possessions of the Chands. This surmise is supported by the local traditions which say that at this time the plains (Bhabar-Tarai) had entirely passed out of the hands of the Chands and that Garur Gyan Chand resolved to proceed to Delhi and to petition the sultan for the grant of the tract along the foot of the hills which had of old belonged to the Katyuri rajas. He is said to have been received with much honour by the sultan and to have accompanied him on a hunting expedition when the raja shot down a large bird (*garuda*) flying with a big snake caught in its talons. The sultan was so pleased with the raja's skill that he not only granted his petition to have and hold

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 503

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 500-501, 519

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 520-521

all the land lying along the foot of the hills as far as the Ganga but directed him to assume henceforth the epithet 'Garur' with his name. The sultan referred to in this tradition may have been Mahmud Tughluq who came to the foot of the hills on a hunting expedition in 1410 or 1412 A.D., or Daulat Khan Lodi, who paid a similar visit in 1413.<sup>1</sup> In 1419, Khizr Khan, the Saiyid sultan of Delhi, sent a big force across the Ganga to invade Katehr and chastise its raja, Hari Singh, who, failing to resist the enemy, fled towards Kumaon. The sultan's army pursued Hari Singh, into the mountains, but being disheartened by the difficulties of the region it retreated.<sup>2</sup>

The forty-five years' long reign of Garur Gyan Chand, ended with his death in 1419 A.D. The next four rulers were Harihar Chand, Udyan Chand, Atma Chand and Hari Chand, none of whom ruled for more than a year.<sup>3</sup> The last of these was succeeded by his son Vikram Chand, who is said to have ascended the throne in 1423 A.D. All the dates of the Chand rajas given so far are chiefly based on traditional chronologies and are not supported by any epigraphical evidence, but Vikram Chand appears to have been the first Chand raja whose period is confirmed by an inscription by which, in Saka year 1345 (or 1423 A.D.), he confirmed certain old land grants.<sup>4</sup> By another record he granted a village to one Kulomani Pandit in 1424 A.D.<sup>5</sup> Towards the close of his reign Vikram Chand is said to have neglected the affairs of the state which gave an opportunity to some members of the royal family to raise the standard of revolt.<sup>6</sup> According to the traditional chronology, Vikram Chand's reign came to an end in 1437 A.D. when he was replaced by his rebel nephew, Bharati Chand, who won the throne with the help of his Khasiya partisans. But a copperplate grant dated in Saka 1351 (A.D. 1429) proves that Dharma Chand was reigning at that time. This shows that Dharma Chand and not Bharati Chand, had succeeded Vikram Chand and that, too, some time in or before 1429 A.D., and it was probably during the reign of Dharma Chand that Mubarak Shah, the Saiyid sultan of Delhi, invaded the southern part of Kumaon in 1424 A.D. in pursuit of Hari Singh Katehriya.<sup>7</sup>

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 521-522

2. *Ibid.*, p. 521

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 523, 527-528

4. *Ibid.*, p. 528

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, p. 521

Bharati Chand's traditional dates are 1437—1450, but, it is said that there is a deed of this raja in the Almora archives recording a grant of land to one Ramakanth Kuleta in 1445 A.D.<sup>1</sup> and another copperplate inscription records that in Saka 1399 (A.D. 1477) during the reign of Bharati Chand certain persons granted land to some Brahmanas. These definitely known dates of this raja indicate that he ruled at least from 1445 to 1477 A.D. He is said to have continued the series of encroachments which Garur Gyan Chand had commenced and which ended in the consolidation of almost the entire Kumaon region under the Chand rule.<sup>2</sup> The Rainka rajas of Doti had for generations been the acknowledged suzerains of the Kali Kumaon tract and the younger branches of this family held almost independent control over Sira and Shor on the left bank of the Sarju (in district Pithoragarh). It was against Doti that Bharati Chand first directed his arms. The war lasted for 12 years, ending in the defeat of the Rainka raja who now agreed to relinquish all pretensions to any claim he had over the territory under the Chands.<sup>3</sup> As Ratan Chand, the crown-prince, had played a decisive role in the final victory over Doti, the raja was very pleased with him and even went so far as to abdicate the throne in his son's favour.<sup>4</sup>

The traditional date of Ratan Chand is 1450—1488 A.D., but he must have ascended the throne in or a little after 1477 A.D. He enhanced the prestige of his kingdom and is said to have made a tour through the outlying *pattis* of his territory and to have made a settlement with the resident cultivators. It is said that the first real attempt at administration should date from his time. When the Rainka raja of Doti made an effort to reassert his authority over Kali Kumaon, Ratan Chand promptly invaded Doti with an overwhelming force and crushed the Rainka raja. He also compelled five of the feudatories of the Rainka raja to tender their submission to himself and to agree to pay to him an annual tribute of one pod of musk, a bow, a quiver full of arrows, a hawk and a horse each. Then Ratan Chand invaded Shor, the territory of the Bam rajas who resided in Udaipur and also at Bailorkot in the winter, and succeeded in annexing Shor for a time to his own kingdom<sup>5</sup>.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 529

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 528-529

3. *Ibid.*, p. 529

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 529-530



Ratan Chand was succeeded by his son Kirati Chand who bears as warlike a reputation as his father and was constantly engaged in drilling and exercising his soldiers and preparing for some expedition or other. When the Rainka raja of Doti again raised his head he was crushed. Brave prince as he was, the raja wished to lead his forces personally but was dissuaded from doing so by a holy man named Nagnath who came to acquire great influence over him and finally became his principal adviser. Kirati Chand also conquered the Katyuri principalities of Barahmandal and Pali as also Phaldakot and Kotah. Thus Kirati Chand was one of the most active and successful rajas of his family and held sway over the whole of Kumaon except the principalities of Katyur, Danpur, Askot, Sira, Shor and Gangoli. In other words, the bulk of the present Pithoragarh district was still out of direct control of the Chands.<sup>1</sup>

After Kirati Chand's death Pratap Chand, Tara Chand, Manik Chand, Kuli Kalyan Chand and Puran Chand ruled in succession. Nothing important seems to have taken place during these short-lived and often weak reigns.<sup>2</sup>

The next raja was Bhishma Chand whose traditional dates are 1555—1560 A.D.,<sup>3</sup> but a copperplate inscription specifically records that in Saka year 1436 and Vikrama Samvat 1571 (which correspond to 1514 A.D.) *rajadhiraja* (king of kings) Bhishma Chandra Deva gave grants of land to certain Brahmanas on the occasion of a solar eclipse, the measure of land used being *jyula* which is still current in Kumaon. This epigraphical evidence proves without doubt that Bhishma Chand had come to the throne in or a little before 1514 A.D. It was probably during his reign that Khawas Khan, a rebel officer of Islam Shah Sur (1545—54), made the outskirts of the Kumaon hills his home from where he ravaged the territory of the sultan of Delhi. Pressed by the sultan's forces he sought protection of the raja of Kumaon who gave some villages as well as a daily cash allowance for his support. The sultan tried several times to persuade the raja to surrender Khawas Khan, but the raja indignantly refused to comply, saying "How can I throw into fetters a man who has sought my protection? As long as I have breath in my body, I can never be guilty of such baseness." The magnanimity shown by the raja is a bright spot in the annals of the Chands and was recognized even by

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 533—537

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 537—539

3. *Ibid.*, p. 539

Muslim historians.<sup>1</sup> Bhishma Chand also intended to shift his capital from Champawat to the Khagmara fort (Almora), but before he could do so he fell prey to a Khasiya revolt and was murdered while asleep.<sup>2</sup> He had no son and, therefore, had adopted Balo Kalyan Chand, a son of Tara Chand, who succeeded him.<sup>3</sup>

Balo Kalyan Chand appears to have ascended the throne about 1555 A.D. He accepted the choice of his predecessor and made the Khagmara hill his capital under the name Almora.<sup>4</sup> He also launched on a career of conquest. Narayan Chand, the Mankoti raja of Gangoli, gave offence to Balo Kalyan Chand who thereupon invaded Gangoli, quickly overran it and annexed it to his own kingdom.<sup>5</sup> He was desirous of making the river Kali the eastern boundary of his dominions. When during his campaign against Gangoli he was encamped at Gangolihat he looked with longing eyes on the fair country, the territory of the rajas of Sira, which they had recovered from Ratan Chand and was still in their possession. Balo Kalyan Chand had married a sister of the Rainka raja of Doti and as the entire tract (including Sira) to the east of the Ramganga was recognised as belonging to that family, he urged his wife to beg from her brother the Sira territory as dowry. The Rainka raja replied that Sira was the chief possession (*sir*) of Doti and was, therefore, as dear to him as his own head and that he would never give up Sira, but that the Chand raja might get Shor instead, which also similarly belonged to Doti. Balo Kalyan Chand accordingly took possession of Shor but was unsuccessful in his attempt to lay hands on Sira and returned to Almora. Next, he captured the Khasiya principality of Danpur.<sup>6</sup>

Balo Kalyan Chand's busy career came to an end about 1565 A.D. and he was succeeded by his young son, Rudra Chand, who, in the traditional chronology, is assigned to 1565—1597 A.D. For once tradition is fully corroborated by epigraphy as several grants of this raja, dating from Saka 1489 (A.D. 1567) to Saka 1518 (A.D. 1596) are said to have been extant.<sup>7</sup> Shortly after his accession the Tarai and Bhabar tracts of his dominion were occupied by the Muslims, probably under Husain Khan Tukriya who was an officer of

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 537—539

2. *Ibid.*, p. 539

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, p. 541

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 541-542

7. *Ibid.*, p. 501

the Mughal emperor Akbar and is said to have been a bigoted, cruel and merciless fanatic noted for his tyranny towards the Hindus.<sup>1</sup> According to the historian Firishta, at this time an impression of the great wealth of Kumaon was generally prevalent among the Muslims.<sup>2</sup> Husain Khan Tukriya ravaged the country at the foot of the hills and appears to have penetrated the Doti territory, but there is no evidence to show that during his several expeditions towards the hills, he ever succeeded in attacking Kumaon.<sup>3</sup> It is also said that on a representation made by the raja, this officer was recalled to Delhi. Sultan Ibrahim, another Mughal officer, is also credited with the conquest of Dīman-i-Koh (foot-hills of Kumaon).<sup>4</sup> About 1580 A. D., there was a revolt in the Sambhal area and several hill chieftains, including those of Kumaon, joined it but they were repulsed and retreated into their mountain shelter. The rajas of Kumaon used now and then to send presents to the emperor of Delhi but had never gone to the Mughal court to pay homage in person and had remained quite independent up to the 33rd year of Akbar's reign, which corresponds to 1587 A. D. Tradition has it that at the invitation of Akbar, Rudra Chand went to Lahore and attended on the emperor who conferred on the raja a formal grant of the Chaurasi Mal parganas and excused him from personal attendance at the Mughal court for the rest of his life. Rudra Chand is also said to have made Birbal (Akbar's famous Brahmana minister) his *purohit* (family priest) and it is said that up to the close of Chand rule Birbal's descendants used to visit Almora to collect the customary dues<sup>5</sup>. Contemporary Muslim chroniclers have also hinted at Rudra Chand's visit to the Mughal court, although in their habitual derogatory terms. It is said that in 996 A. H. (1587-88 A. D.), Mathura Das, the *faujdar* of Bareilly, persuaded the raja to go to the Mughal court, but the latter did not rely on him for protection and asked that Todar Mal (Akbar's revenue minister) should guarantee his safety. At this Todar Mal sent his son Kalyan Das to escort the raja to Akbar's court where Rudra Chand was received as one among the vassals of the Mughal empire. In the *Ain-i-Akbari*, Kumaon is described as one of the *sirkars* of the subah of Delhi, but the revenue figures for that *sirkar* are given in thousands with respect to all its parganas and no area figures are given. The raja was to supply 3,000 cavalry and 5,000

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 543

2. *Ibid.*, p. 542

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 542-545

4. *Ibid.*, p. 545

5. *Ibid.*, p. 546



infantry, but no extra jagir or cash allowance was granted to him for the maintenance of this contingent. It appears that this levy represents rather what was theoretically expected than what was actually supplied or enforced and that the allegiance was only nominal and the kingdom of Kumaon was not politically under the authority of the provincial government of the Mughal empire.

Rudra Chand's mother, who had asked her brother (the Rainka raja of Doti) to give her Sira as dowry but was refused and whose late husband (Balo Kalyan Chand) had failed to seize that territory forcibly, now urged her son, Rudra Chand, to capture Sirakot. She went even so far as to declare that she would not become sati until Rudra Chand fulfilled her wish with respect to Sira. Consequently Rudra Chand invaded Sira, but was utterly defeated by the Rainka raja, Hari Malla, and fled with the remnants of his army to Gangoli. One day, when deserted by most of his retainers, Rudra Chand was resting there under a tree. Looking upwards he saw a spider weaving its web. Six times the spider failed but ultimately it succeeded in completing the web and began to eat the flies that were caught in it. The sight gave heart and hope to the raja who on his return to Almora appointed Parkhu (Purushottam) Pant to the command of the Sira expedition. Parkhu Pant himself belonged to Gangoli and his maternal uncle lived in Sira. The forces of Rudra Chand under the leadership of Parkhu Pant attacked Sirakot thrice but were each time repulsed with great loss. The persevering general, however, did not lose heart and, fortified with a similar sight as had encouraged Rudra Chand and with the advice of a shrewd old woman of the locality, he changed his tactics in a renewed attack on the fort of Sira. He cut off the supplies of the besieged, which they used to get from Johar, as also the adit (*surang*) at Chunpatha by which the garrison obtained water. The result was that in a short time Hari Malla abandoned the fort and fled to Doti. Sira was thus conquered and annexed to the dominions of the Chands<sup>1</sup>. Rudra Chand rewarded Purushottam Pant with a grant of several villages, which was recorded on a copperplate. It also mentions his victory over the raja of Doti. The grant is dated 1581 A. D.<sup>2</sup> Rudra Chand next took possession of Darma, Johar and Askot, but allowed the Rajwar of Askot to retain his patrimony as a feudatory zamindar of the Chand rajas, which the Rajwars have continued to do till recently.

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1. Atkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 550—552

2. *Ibid.*, p. 552

In fact, Askot has been the only estate in Kumaon held in pure zamindari and to which the rule of descent through the eldest son is attached. Karu Gosain, a junior member of the Askot family, was on account of his personal knowledge about the locality, appointed to settle the revenues of the Darma and Johar *pattis* while Byans and Chaudans continued to remain under the administration of the raja of Jumla,<sup>1</sup> a small principality in the north.

Rudra Chand was succeeded by his second son, Lakshmi Chand (1597—1621) since the eldest son, Shakti Gosain, was blind. Yet it was Shakti Gosain's administrative reforms which made the reign of Lakshmi Chand memorable. He worked out a complete settlement record of the land, making the *bisi* the standard of measure and mapping out the entire cultivated area.<sup>2</sup> This raja also paid a visit to the court of his contemporary Mughal emperor, Jahangir. The friendly relations between the kingdom of Kumaon and the Mughal government appear to have continued during the reign of Jahangir who is said to have given the raja rich presents and to have 'presented him with his territory according to previous engagements', thereby hinting at the nature of the treaty between the two powers. Lakshmi Chand died in 1621 A. D.

The next raja was Dalip Chand who ruled only for three years. It appears that during his reign there was some trouble in Gangoli due to the time-old enmity between the Upreti and Pant factions. Consequently, Jait Ram Pant, the leader of the Pant faction of Gangoli, was seized, condemned and burnt to death in the presence of the raja by his orders<sup>3</sup>.

Dalip Chand was succeeded by Bijaya Chand who was a minor and reigned only for one year. The entire power of government is said to have been wielded by Sukhrām Kharku, Piru Gosain and Binayak Bhat, all the three hailing from Shor. In Saka 1547 (A.D. 1625), this raja granted certain lands to the family of one Damu Pande<sup>4</sup>. The raja and many of the male members of the royal family fell victim to a heinous regicide plot hatched by the three ministers. Trimal Chand, a son of Lakshmi Chand, who was one of the survivors and had escaped to Garhwal, obtained the throne with the help of the raja of Garhwal and ruled from 1625 to 1638. The three regicides were severely punished and the affairs of government reorganised. As

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1. *Ibid.* p. 553

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 555-556

3. *Ibid.*, p. 558

4. *Ibid.*, p. 558

the raja had no son he adopted Baz Bahadur Chand, a son of his brother Nil Gosain<sup>1</sup>.

Baz Bahadur Chand (1638—78 A.D.) was a contemporary of Shah Jahan and Aurangzob. He seems to have ignored his treaty obligations and had to be reduced to formal submission again in 1654 A. D. by Khalilullah Khan, the Mughal general. The same year he went to Delhi and obtained an audience with the emperor who told the raja to join the army then proceeding against Garhwal. In this expedition Baz Bahadur Chand distinguished himself so much that on his return Shah Jahan honoured him by many signal marks of imperial favour and conferred on him the title 'Bahadur' (brave)<sup>2</sup>.

In his own wars against the rajas of Garhwal, Baz Bahadur Chand, was not successful, though he continued to remain hostile towards them. In 1670, in consequence of frequent complaints brought to him of the harsh and cruel conduct of the Huniyas (Tibetans) towards pilgrims to the holy Mansarowar and Kailash, he invaded Tibet and captured the fort of Taklakhar (Taklakot). As a result, he wrested control over all the passes from the Tibetans and made them promise to allow Indian pilgrims to pass free to Mansarowar. He set apart the revenue of five villages (Panchu, etc.) near the passes for the purpose of providing pilgrims going to and returning from Mansarowar and Mount Kailash with food, clothing and lodging. During this northern expedition he also investigated the tenure of the Rajwar of Askot and confirmed the orders made by his predecessors<sup>3</sup>.

On his return to the capital the raja found that his enemies had been at work during his absence and had incited his eldest son, Udyot Chand, who was suspected of having designs on the throne. The prince was, therefore, sent to Gangoli to take charge of all the districts beyond the river Sarju, that is, almost the whole of Pithoragarh district<sup>4</sup>. Baz Bahadur Chand was a good administrator and was generous towards holy men and religious places. As many as 16 grants, in the years from 1640 A.D. to 1675 A.D., are known to have been made by him in favour of different temples, shrines, places of pilgrimage and learned Brahmanas<sup>5</sup>. He died in 1678 and his son, Udyot Chand, was recalled from Gangoli and installed on the throne.

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 558—560

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 561-562

3. *Ibid.*, p. 567

4. *Ibid.*, p. 567

5. *Ibid.*, p. 566, footnote 1



Udyot Chand ruled from 1678 to 1698 A.D. and like his father he was also a great patron of learned men, built and endowed many temples, and issued 16 grants, ranging in dates from 1678 to 1697, of which one of 1682 A. D. is in favour of the Rameshwar temple (in *patti* Bel, tahsil Didihat of the Pithoragarh district), two of 1693 are in favour of the Kalika temple of Gangolihat, one of the same year in favour of the Bhaunaditya temple at Bel and one of 1695 again in favour of the Rameshwar temple<sup>1</sup>. Hostilities with Doti on the east and Garhwal on the west continued during his reign as well. In 1680, the raja of Garhwal entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Rainka raja of Doti against the Chand raja and attacked Kumaon one on the west and the other on the east. For a time they appeared to be successful but in the end Udyot Chand came out victorious over both his enemies, this war having lasted for full two years. Henceforward, the Chand raja kept strong garrisons stationed at several strategic points both on his western as well as eastern frontiers, one on the latter being Shor along the Kali.<sup>2</sup> Udyot Chand died in 1698 and was succeeded by his son Gyan Chand.

As in former times, almost every Chand raja commenced his reign by an invasion of Doti, so now every incumbent of the Chand throne considered it to be his primary duty to invade Garhwal and Gyan Chand followed the family tradition. Every year one side or the other made marauding expeditions which served little purpose except rendering the lands near the borders of the two kindgoms desolate<sup>3</sup>. Gyan Chand is also known to have issued several grants of land, especially to certain Pande and Joshi families of Brahmanas, their dates corroborating the local chronicles with respect to this reign.<sup>4</sup> Gyan Chand died in 1708 A.D.

#### MODERN PERIOD

In 1708, Gyan Chand was succeeded by Jagat Chand, his son, who also began his reign by invading Garhwal and proceeded as far as Srinagar, capital of Garhwal. The raja of Garhwal, Fateh Sah, fled to Dehra Dun and Jagat Chand formally bestowed Srinagar on a Brahmana and divided the spoils of the expedition amongst his followers and the poor.

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 569-570 and footnote 1 on p. 556

2. *Ibid.*, p. 670

3. *Ibid.*, p. 671

4. *Ibid.*, p. 572

In 1720, Jagat Chand died and was succeeded by his son, Debi Chand. With his reign started the decline of the Chand power and the Garhwalis were able to regain all their lost territories. Debi Chand, however, made an attempt to pay off all the debts of his subjects. Most of the money spent in this undertaking found its way into the coffers of the money-lenders, who were thus enable to complete their preparations for the impending struggle for power. Debi Chand was also led to take part in political struggles going on in the plains and consequently suffered a defeat at the hands of the troops of Muhammad Shah (Mughal emperor), while supporting the claim of Sabir Shah, a pretender to the throne of Delhi.

In 1726, Debi Chand was murdered through the conspiracy of the Bishts, his ministers, who set up Ajit Chand (a grandson of Gyan Chand) on the throne. The Bishts now gave themselves up to the full enjoyment of their ill-gotten power; they plundered the people in the raja's name and kept all real power in their own hands. A palace intrigue resulted in the murder of Ajit Chand in 1729 and he was succeeded in 1730 by Kalyan Chand, a distant and impoverished relation of the late raja. His first act was to punish the arrogant Bisht ministers. They were beheaded. In order to make his position secure against possible rivals, he sent executioners throughout the land with orders to slay all who had any pretensions to bear the name of Chand family or belong to it. Families which bore any reputation of being of Chand descent were either killed or banished.

During 1743-44, Kalyan Chand became embroiled with the Rohillas by assassinating Himmat Singh Gosain (also known as Duli Chand), an ally of Ali Muhammad Khan, the Rohilla chief of Rohilkhand, and found his territory invaded by a force of 10,000 men under the command of Hafiz Rahmat Khan. Kalyan Chand fled to Garhwal and entreated the protection of Pradip Shah, the raja of Garhwal, but their combined forces suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of the Rohillas. The Garhwal raja, on behalf of Kalyan Chand, had to pay three lakhs of rupees to the Rohillas in consideration of which the latter agreed to abandon his country. Kalyan Chand now became blind and in 1747 he abdicated the throne in favour of his young son, Dip Chand, appointing Shiv Deo Joshi (the leader of the Mahra faction) as regent. Mahra and Phartiyal were the two political factions at the court of Kumaon under the Chand rulers from the very beginning.

In 1761, about 4,000 Kumaonis participated in the battle of Panipat, fighting on the side of the Rohillas. During the early part of the reign of Dip Chand, the country enjoyed peace and prosperity, but a few years later, Pradip Sah again intervened in the affairs of Kumaon at the instance of Jai Kishan Joshi, who although a Mahra had now joined the Phartiyal faction, and wanted to raise Amar Singh Rautela to the throne of Kumaon. Pradip Sah invaded the Chand territory, but suffered defeat.

In 1764, Shiv Deo Joshi was murdered and anarchy prevailed in Kumaon. Dip Chand was incapable and his wife, Sringar Manjari, took the reins in her own hands, but was murdered by Mohan Singh (of the Chand house), who later, in 1777, treacherously killed Dip Chand together with his two sons in the fort of Sirakot, which was used as the state prison by the Chand rajas. Mohan Singh proclaimed himself raja under the title of Mohan Chand. He signalled his accession to the throne by the slaughter of all the friends and relatives of Shiv Deo Joshi and a complete reign of terror commenced. The rajas of Doti and Garhwal now intervened. Raja Lalit Sah of Garhwal was the first to take the field. He led a strong army into Kumaon and gained a complete victory in 1779. On receiving the news of the serious reverses of his forces, Mohan Chand, who was then at Gangoli, fled to the plains. Lalit Sah placed his own son, Pradyuman Sah, on the throne of Kumaon under the title of Pradyuman Chand. Lalit Sah died almost in the moment of his victory in Kumaon and Jayakrit Sah, his eldest son, became the ruler of Garhwal. Between him and Pradyuman Chand, his brother, quarrels soon arose, the former demanding an acknowledgement of his seniority by right of birth. Pradyuman Chand refused to give way on the ground that he was bound to maintain the dignity of the throne of Kumaon to which he had succeeded. Jayakrit Sah now began to intrigue with the exile, Mohan Chand. Sensing that the situation was fraught with danger, Harsh Deo Joshi, the prime minister of Kumaon, went to Garhwal with a strong escort and demanded an interview with Jayakrit Sah in the hope of arriving at a settlement, but the latter, who doubted Harsh Deo Joshi's sincerity, refused the request and attacked him. But he was defeated and obliged to seek safety in flight. He fell ill and died and the troops of Kumaon plundered and burnt every village on their way back. Parakram Sah, another brother of Jayakrit Sah, now proclaimed himself raja of Garhwal but Pradyuman Sah came over from Almora, assumed the crown of Garhwal and transferred his empty throne to Parakram Sah. As



the latter was a weak ruler, Mohan Chand made good his re-entry into Kumaon in 1786, thus bringing to an end the Garhwali domination of Kumaon. Mohan Chand was now supreme but only for a short time as in 1788 he was killed by Harsh Deo Joshi who invited Pradyuman Chand to take possession of the vacant throne of Kumaon. The offer was, however, declined.

Harsh Deo Joshi then placed on the throne of Kumaon one Shiv Singh (said to have been a descendant of Udyot Chand) under the title of Shiv Chand. Troubles soon arose as Lal Singh, a brother of Mohan Chand, assisted by Parakram Sah, invaded Kumaon. Harsh Deo Joshi along with Shiv Chand retired to the plains, while Lal Singh installed Mahendra Singh, the son of Mohan Chand, as raja, styling him Mahendra Chand. Lal Singh took the place of Harsh Deo Joshi as chief adviser and proceeded to persecute the Joshis; some were imprisoned, some banished and others executed.

In 1790, the Gurkhas under Chautariya Bahadur Shah, Kazi Jagjit Pande, Amar Singh Thapa and Sur Vir Thapa marched into Kumaon, one division crossing the river Kali into Shor (in Pithoragarh district) with a second occupying *patti* Bisung. When the news of this aggression reached Almora, all was confusion and despair. Mahendra Chand summoned the entire fighting population and with part of his regular troops took the field in Gangoli (in Pithoragarh district) while Lal Singh, his general, advanced through Kali Kumaon. The Gurkha division under Amar Singh Thapa was defeated by Mahendra Chand and was obliged to retire towards Kali Kumaon. In Kali Kumaon, however, the invaders were successful, and falling upon Lal Singh, they drove him, with the loss of 200 men, towards the plains. Mahendra Chand, losing heart, abandoned his charge and fled. The Gurkhas after slight resistance occupied Almora.

The news of the Chinese invasion of Nepal next year (in 1791 A.D.) caused the withdrawal of the Gurkha troops for the defence of their own country and they appointed Harsh Deo Joshi as their regent in Almora. But the Gurkhas doubted his sincerity and wanted to take him to Nepal. They had hardly reached Gangoli when Harsh Deo Joshi made his escape to Johar (in tahsil Didihat) where the Gurkhas had not established their authority but he was caught by the supporters of Mahendra Chand. Subsequently he managed to escape to Srinagar to get protection from its raja, Pradyuman Sah. The Gurkhas having settled their dispute with China returned to Almora. Meanwhile, Mahendra Chand made two unsuccessful incursions into Kumaon to regain his lost kingdom.

The Gurkhas at this time clashed with the British, who by 1814 had extended their boundaries as far north as the Gurkha frontier. As the border districts now began to suffer from the incessant inroads of the Gurkhas, Lord Hastings, the governor-general, seized the opportunity of rescuing the inhabitants of Kumaon from the yoke of the Gurkhas and extending British domination over Kumaon. Therefore, in April 1815, the British invaded Kumaon, defeated the Gurkhas and so demoralised them that they deserted in large numbers. Though the Nepal government was compelled to sign a treaty, it refused to ratify the instrument and prepared to re-enter the theatre of war. But when the British, under Ochterlony, who had penetrated into the heart of Nepal, defeated the Gurkha army on February 28, 1816, the Nepal government agreed to enter into what is known as the treaty of Sigauli, whereby the Gurkhas ceded Kumaon, including the region covered by the district of Pithoragarh, to the East India Company.<sup>1</sup>

In 1838, Kumaon was placed under the jurisdiction of the Sadar Board of Revenue in fiscal matters.

In 1857, when the freedom struggle broke out in northern India, Henry Ramsay, the commissioner, kept this region quiet. Martial law and curfew order were promulgated. Every suspected person was either sent to jail or shot down. Many freedom fighters were hanged.<sup>2</sup>

In 1912, a branch of the Indian National Congress was established in the region and in 1916 many persons from the district participated in the Congress session held at Lucknow.

In 1921, the non-co-operation movement was started in the whole of Kumaon including Pithoragarh. In the civil disobedience movement, which was started by Gandhiji in 1930, about 10 persons participated from Pithoragarh. In 1937, the peasants of Askot organised a movement against the prevailing feudalism. In the same year, in the elections to the provincial legislature, a Congress seat was won from Pithoragarh. The 'Quit India' movement of August 9, 1942, was strongly supported in Pithoragarh and about 150 persons were arrested and many fined. In the general elections of 1945, for the provincial assembly, a Congress seat was won from Pithoragarh. In 1947, this area, along with the rest of the country, won independence from British rule, when it was a part of the district of Almora, the district being formed in 1960.

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1. Rizvi, S. A. A. (Ed.): *Freedom Struggle in Uttar Pradesh*, Vol. I, p. 142

2. *Ibid.*; Vol. V, pp. 271, 531, 549, 551—553

## CHAPTER III

### PEOPLE

#### GROWTH OF POPULATION

The first estimate of the population of the region covered by the district of Pithoragarh may be said to have been made when, in 1821, Traill, the first British commissioner, of Kumaon, assessed the population of the old district of Kumaon which included the present districts of Pithoragarh, Almora and Naini Tal. It was only a rough estimate and the figure for the population of the tract covered by the first two of these districts was given as 1,35,533. As the figures, at most of the subsequent enumerations, for the tract representing the Pithoragarh district have been a little more than a quarter of those for the combined population of the districts of Pithoragarh and Almora, those for the former appear to have been in the neighbourhood of 40,000 in the first census of Traill.

Estimates, equally rough, were also made in 1848, and between 1863 and 1868 for the population of this tract, while in 1852 a census was taken. At the census of 1872, which was more systematic, the population of the region comprising the Almora and Pithoragarh districts was found to be 3,54,579, at that of 1881 it was 3,60,967 and at that of 1891, when the Almora district (including the Pithoragarh region) was for the first time constituted as a separate unit, its population was returned as 4,16,868. Presuming that the ratio between the population of the entire tract and that of its part now constituted into the Pithoragarh district remained almost unchanged the population of the latter in 1891 would be about 1,20,000. Figures for the subsequent decennial censuses with respect to these two regions separately are available.

On February 24, 1960, the district of Pithoragarh as a separate administrative unit was constituted out of the Pithoragarh tahsil plus two *pattis* (containing 164 villages) of the Almora tahsil of the erstwhile district of Almora and it was only in 1961 that the first regular census of the Pithoragarh district proper was undertaken. Its area, according to the Central Statistical Organisation, was 7,243 sq. km. in 1966, and the total population in 1961 was returned as 2,63,579, the males numbering 1,28,292 and the females 1,35,287.



The decennial figures of the population of the district from 1901 to 1961 are given below :

Year	Persons	Male	Female	Females per 1,000 males
1901 .. ..	1,30,486	66,035	64,451	976
1911 .. ..	1,51,213	76,748	74,465	970
1921 .. ..	1,52,567	76,307	76,260	999
1931 .. ..	1,67,803	84,003	83,800	998
1941 .. ..	1,97,718	98,380	99,338	1,010
1951 .. ..	2,22,346	1,09,655	1,12,691	1,028
1961 .. ..	2,63,579	1,28,292	1,35,287	1,055

The following statement shows the decennial growth, variation and percentage of variation in the population of the district from 1901 to 1961 :

Year	Population	Variation	Percentage of variation
1901 .. ..	1,30,486	..	..
1911 .. ..	1,51,213	+ 20,727	+ 15.88
1921 .. ..	1,52,567	+ 1,354	+ 0.90
1931 .. ..	1,67,803	+ 15,236	+ 9.99
1941 .. ..	1,97,718	+ 29,915	+ 17.83
1951 .. ..	2,22,346	+ 24,628	+ 12.46
1961 .. ..	2,63,579	+ 41,233	+ 18.54

There has thus been a steady growth in the population of the district during the last 60 years, the smallest increase of 0.9 per cent being in the decade 1911—1921 and the biggest, 18.54 per cent, in 1951—1961, which was higher than even the State average of 16.66 per cent. The percentage variation in the population of the district from 1901 to 1961 has been + 102, which means it has almost doubled during this period. In 1961, the district stood 52nd, in point of total population, among the districts of Uttar Pradesh and the density of population here was 36 persons per sq. km., which was much below the State average of 250 persons per sq. km. Females outnumbered

males by 6,995, the proportion between the sexes being 1,055 females per 1,000 males.

### Population by Subdivisions/Tahsils

The district is divided into four tahsils or subdivisions and has in it 1,668 inhabited and 164 uninhabited villages. The tahsilwise break-up of villages and population is given below :

Tahsil	Villages		Population		
	Uninhabited	Inhabited	Persons	Male	Female
Mansyari ..	18	209	30,377	15,385	14,992
Dharchula ..	3	73	32,566	16,813	15,753
Didihat ..	96	792	96,518	46,066	50,452
Pithoragarh ..	47	594	1,04,118	50,028	54,090
Total ..	164	1,668	2,63,579	1,28,292	1,35,287

### Immigration and Emigration

There has not been any very significant immigration into the district. According to the census of 1961, as many as 93.80 per cent of its population were born within its boundaries and of the remainder 3.14 per cent were born in other districts of the State, 0.35 per cent in other States of the Indian Union and 2.57 per cent in other countries outside India. Those migrating from other parts of the State numbered 8,276 of whom 5,259 were females, and those from other parts of the country were 928 in number (including 269 females) of whom 238 hailed from Himachal Pradesh, 143 from Punjab, 110 from Maharashtra, 105 from Delhi and the rest from other parts of India. Of the 6,796 persons born in places outside India, 5,255 (including 2,774 females) had their places of birth in Nepal, 209 (including 94 females) in Burma, 92 (including 15 females) in Pakistan, 3 males in Afghanistan and one female in China, 2 in the United Kingdom and one in U.S.A. The number of those hailing from Asiatic countries other than those mentioned above was 1,233 (including 582 females) and of those termed 'unclassifiable' was 125 (males 14 and females 111).

Of the 8,276 migrants from other districts of the State, 3,100 had been residing in the district for less than one year, 2,038 for more than one but less than five years and 1,585 for over 15 years.

Of those from other States of the country 438 have been here for less than a year and 306 for more than one year but less than five years. Of the 5,255 Nepalese, 3,319 have been residing here for less than five years, while the number of such Pakistanis was 64 (out of 92) and that of other foreigners 1,289 (out of 1,449).

The number of non-Indian nationals residing in the district at the time of the census was returned as 2,897 (males 2,164 and females 733), the majority being represented by the Nepalese (1,475 males and 127 females) and as many as 1,272 persons being stated to be from places unspecified.

Some persons do go out of the district to the neighbouring districts of the Kumaon and Garhwal regions and even to those in the plains in search of better employment, or military or civil service, but exact figures not being available it is difficult to assess the loss in population of the district on this account. Besides this emigration, which does not appear to be very conspicuous, a well-defined general movement of a part of the population of the district takes place every year, although it is seasonal and temporary. As the winter advances the region lying beyond the snow line becomes deserted. By the middle of November, the villages situated higher up in the hills begin to be buried in snow and the inhabitants start moving southwards. Camps are established at convenient points lower down in the southern parts of the district and in the Almora and Naini Tal districts, where the womenfolk and children abide with their flocks and herds (other than pack animals) and the bulk of their merchandise. The men move on their journey to the submontane marts, doing considerable trade on the way and attending all the fairs held on the wayside. They return again and again to their camps till all their goods have been transported or disposed of. About the middle of May, these people go back to their original homes near the great passes in order to pass the summer months there.

### Displaced Persons

Due to the political change which took place in Tibet in 1958, a number of Tibetans fled their homeland and took refuge in this district, the first batch of these Tibetan refugees arriving here in November, 1959. In order to provide shelter and relief to them, a camp was established at Titaldhar, which was shifted first to Panagarh (near Askot) and then to Sandeo (in tahsil Didihat) on March 2, 1960. The majority of the refugees residing in the camp was employed as labourers in road building. The State government also opened an



industrial training centre for their benefit, in which 78 women and girls received training in weaving and carpet making. The camp was abolished on January 1, 1966, when all its 749 inmates were transferred to other States of the Union.

### Distribution of Population

According to the census of 1961, there is no town, hence no urban area, in the district. The following statement shows the number of inhabited villages falling under different ranges of population and the population and percentages of population for each category :

Range of population	No. of villages	Population	Male	Female	Percentage of population
1—199 ..	1,243	1,03,624	49,110	54,514	39.3
200—499 ..	359	1,05,982	51,538	54,444	40.2
500—999 ..	54	34,307	17,369	16,938	13.0
1,000—1,999 ..	8	10,028	4,974	5,054	3.8
2,000—4,999 ..	4	9,638	5,301	4,337	3.7

Thus there is no habitation in the district with a population of 5,000 or above, and the bulk of the population (79.5 per cent) is concentrated in small villages with a population under 500 each.

### LANGUAGE

A list of the principal languages and dialects spoken in the district and the number of persons speaking each, as recorded in the census of 1961, is given below:

Language or dialect	Number of persons
Kumauni	2,44,554
Hindi	9,841
Unspecified (of northern tahsils)	4,938
Nepali	2,227
Tibetan	1,237
Gorkhali	250
Urdu	179
Garhwali	147
Rawati	91
Himachali	51
Punjabi	25
17 others	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,63,579</b>

Thus as many as 28 different languages or dialects have been returned as mother-tongues by the people of the district, but only 8 of them are such as are spoken by more than 100 persons each, whereas 9 are spoken by only one person each and the remaining 11 by 2 to 91 persons each. The largest percentage, 92.78, is of those whose mother-tongue is Kumauni, which is followed by Hindi with 3.73 per cent, that of the inhabitants of the northern *pattis* with 1.87 per cent, Nepali with .84 per cent and Tibetan with .47 per cent, the remaining 23 dialects being distributed among only .31 per cent of the population. A number of persons with any one of these major five languages as their mother-tongue are also bilingual or multilingual.

### Kumauni

The principal language prevalent among the hill-folk of Pithoragarh district is Kumauni which belongs to the Indo-Aryan group of languages and is a form of Central Pahari which itself is a form of Western Hindi. The language is not, however, uniform throughout the district and presents several shades which differ from region to region, the difficulty of intercommunication owing to the existence of valleys and mountains contributing, to a great extent, to this multiplicity of local dialects. Again, as the district is bordered by Tibet on the north, Nepal on the east and Garhwal on the west, some extraneous influences have also worked to make the language of the district one of a composite nature, the dialects of the tracts contiguous to those lands bearing influences of their respective languages. The variations in the local dialects relate mostly to differences in accent, mode of delivery or address, the use of prefixes and suffixes and sometimes to the conjugation of verbs. In most cases these differences are so pronounced that a keen listener can declare with correctness the particular locality to which the speaker belongs. On this basis the district is broadly divided into four linguistic divisions—(i) the Gangoli region, consisting of the *pattis* of Bel, Bherang, Beraun Malla and Beraun Talla (all in tahsil Didihat); (ii) *patti* Pungraun (tahsil Didihat) and the *pattis* of Malla Johar and Talla Johar (tahsil Mansyari); (iii) the tracts known as Shor and Sira and the western half of *patti* Askot Talla (all in tahsil Pithoragarh), the dialects of these three regions being further distinguished as the Shoryali, Sirali, and Askoti, respectively; and (iv) the Kali valley belt, and comprising the *patti* of Askot Malla (tahsil Dharchula), the eastern half of the *patti* of Askot Talla and the *pattis* of Saun, Nayades and Waldia Talla (all in tahsil Pithoragarh). The dialect

of the first of these linguistic divisions is known as the Gangola and is influenced by the Garhwali of the adjoining region on the west, and that of the second is called the Johari. The three sub-dialects of the third bear the influence of the Khaskura or Nepali. The residents of the Kali valley belt, the fourth of these divisions, are said to be the descendants of persons who originally lived in Nepal across the Kali but were induced by the Rajwars of Askot and other grantees of land on this side of the river to come over and settle down in this belt and to break and cultivate the land for them. As a result of the impact of the local Kumauni on their Nepali an intermixed dialect was evolved, which is sometimes designated Khaskura and is manifest in this region.

**Special Features**—In the formation of sentences, declension, etc., the Kumauni of this region broadly follows the rules of Hindi. The most important of its peculiarities, however, is the frequent occurrence of epenthesis, or the change of a vowel owing to the influence of another vowel in the succeeding syllable, such as, *ohelo* (son) becomes *ohyala* (sons) in the plural, the *che* becoming changed into *chya* on account of the *a* following in the syllable *la*. Sometimes the short and long sounds of the vowel *a* also create difference in the meaning of a word, for example *kao*, with short *a*, means black colour, but the same word with long means death. As regards orthography, special *n* and *e* sounds are met with in words like *kan* (thorn) and *bhan* (pot), which are inclined towards palatal sounds. Sibilant *sh* is often used for *kh* and the palatal *sh* is reduced to the dental *s*. No distinction is made between the medial *b* and the labial *v*, the latter being often used for the former. Another marked peculiarity is the tendency of disaspiration as in the word *par* for *parh* (read). The Gangola dialect often drops the final long vowels in pronouncing a word and also tends sometimes to nasalise the last syllable. In the Shoryali the *n* sound is usually replaced by the *ñ* sound and in the Sirali there is a tendency to interchange *a* with *ai*.

There are certain adverbs which are not common in Hindi but are current in these dialects, such as *byal* (evening), *rattai* (morning), *mun* (below), *bhol* (tomorrow) and *aber* (late). Some foreign words, particularly Persian and English, have also crept into the local vocabulary though in a slightly changed form depending upon local pronunciation, such as *vagsi* (*bakhshi*), *mapi* (*maafi*), *vajir* (*vizir*), *saja* (*saza*), *gunah* and *mukam* of the former and *gilas* (glass), *dabal* (double), *aim* (time), *holdar* (havildar), *laftain* (lieutenant) and *karnel* (colonel)



of the latter. The infiltration of Persian words had already begun in the 15th century as is evident from certain copperplate grants of the Chand rajas of those times. There is a general tendency towards assimilation and elision while adopting foreign words in the local speech.

Then there are the dialects spoken by the people living in the *pattis* of Malla Johar and Talla Johar (of tahsil Mansyari) and those of Darma Talla, Darma Malla, Chaudans and Byans (of tahsil Dhar-chula). The dialect of Johar region is known as the Johari and is very close to the Kumauni, no doubt, with conspicuous variations in accent and mode of expression. The people of the Byans, Chaudans and Darma tracts have distinct dialects of their own which have little in common with the Kumauni. Those of Byans and Chaudans, excepting the Kutiyals of village Kutti (in *patti* Byans), speak the Ranglo (or Rang-boli). The Kutiyals, along with the inhabitants of village Tankor (in Nepal), speak an entirely different dialect. Those of the Darma region speak the Darmale (Darma-boli). In general the speech of these northern peoples frequently pronounce 'r' differently; the past tense ends with a short *i* sound, such as in *sunî* (heard) and *rakhohî* (had kept); and some of the words are unknown to Kumauni or Hindi, such as *sin* (tree), *linch* (cup), *phungli* (pitcher), *nya* (fish), *narhi* (dog), *chi* (grass) and *parla* (shoe). It is said that of these dialects the Ranglo and the Darmale prominently bear the Tibeto-Burman influence while the Johari is a sort of mixed jargon, partly Kumauni and partly Tibeto-Burman.

### Kirati

Another dialect spoken in a part of the district is the Kirati which is confined to the Rajis or Ban Rawats, a fast-dwindling forest tribe of Askot and inhabiting the forests of the rivers Gori and Kali in that region. This dialect appears to possess a Munda origin and is highly influenced by the Tibeto-Burman.

### Script

The script used throughout the district is the Devanagari with practically no local variations, except that some letters are written in a slightly different form than in the standard Devanagari.

## RELIGION AND CASTE

The population of the district, as classified according to religions at the census of 1961, is as follows :

Religion			Followers	Male	Female
Hinduism	..	..	2,60,899	1,26,885	1,34,014
Buddhism	..	..	1,304	689	615
Islam	..	..	716	408	308
Christianity	..	..	640	297	343
Sikhism	..	..	12	10	2
Jainism	..	..	8	3	5
Total	..	..	2,63,579	1,28,292	1,35,287

## Principal Communities

**Hindu**—The Hindu community in this district also is patterned on the traditional fourfold caste system, but on account of a predominating Khasa element in the population there appears to be a three-tier structure of society in this area, the heirarchal orders of which may be described as—the high class Brahmanas and Rajputs, that is, those who or whose ancestors came from the plains and settled down here; Khasa Brahmanas and Khasa Rajputs; and the Shudras or Doms who are now generally designated Shilpkars and classed among the Scheduled Castes. There are also a few Vaish immigrants from the plains, a considerable number of persons inhabiting several *pattis* of the two northern tahsils, and a small number of Kuthalia Boras and of Rajis or Ban Rawats of the jungles of Askot. The Brahmanas and Rajputs, both of Khasa and plains extraction, are together termed Biths in order to distinguish them from the Doms or persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes.

The Khasas are an ancient people and, perhaps, are amongst the oldest inhabitants of these parts. They find mention in several Puranas like the *Vayu*, *Vishnu*, *Markandeya*, *Harivamsha* and *Bhagawata* as also in the *Mahabharata* and the *Varaha Samkhita* where they are described as one of the tribes dwelling on the borders of the Bharata-Khanda (India). It is said that the present-day Khasas are the descendants of those early immigrants of the northern part of India who were possibly Aryans but not of the Vedic branch which they

probably preceded. They were scornfully described as having no Brahmanas amongst them. It appears that they were not completely Hinduised until the advent of Shankaracharya in the Uttarakhand about the beginning of the ninth century A.D. The growing contacts with the plains and the succeeding waves of Brahmana and Rajput immigrants from those quarters seem to have helped the process. The Khasas not only adopted many of their customs, ways and beliefs, but also many of the newly-settled Brahmanas as their priests. It has also been suggested that their original tribal priests may also have begun performing the functions of the Brahmanas and in course of time arrogated the latter's title (caste designation) as well. Perhaps there was an intermingling of blood, too, between these two groups of Brahmanas associated with the Khasas and the result was that a regular caste of Khasa Brahmanas came into being as distinct from the high class Brahmanas from the plains. Similarly, an intermixture of non-Brahmana Khasas and Rajputs from the plains gave rise to the caste of Khasa Rajputs.

The subdivisions of the high class Brahmanas are the Pant, Pandey, Joshi, Tiwari, Upreti, Upadhyaya, Pathak, Duggal and Bhatt. They generally profess to have come here in the company of some adventurers or pilgrims or to have been invited by local rulers. The PANTS claim that Jaideo, their ancestor, came here and obtained from the raja of Kumaon a grant of land in Gangoli. Some of the ancestors of the Pandeyes are said to have hailed from Kot Kangra (Himachal Pradesh) while some others to have immigrated from the plains. The members of the Joshi (said to be a corruption of *jyotishi* meaning astrologer) caste say that their ancestors came from Jhusi (near Allahabad) which was their original home. The Tiwaris have been cultivators, priests and teachers, some of them being also employed in government service. The Khasa Brahmanas, who are also known as Halbanewale (cultivators) or Pitaliya Brahmanas because they wear a brass bracelet instead of the sacred thread, are also divided into a number of subdivisions usually named after some village or locality.

The Rajputs, who claim to be the descendants of ancient Kshatriyas and to have been associated originally with the plains, belong mostly to the Raotela, Rajwar and Munral (or Manural) septs. The first of these are the descendants of the Chand rajas of Kumaon who claimed to belong to the Chandravamsha or Lunar race and to have hailed from Jhusi. Both the Rajwars and the Munrals profess to



have descended from the ancient Katyuri rulers of this region and to be extracted from the Surajbans (Suryavamsha) or Solar race. The stronghold of the Rajwars is the Askot tract of tahsil Pithoragarh over which they had been ruling for centuries. Other Rajput septs of the district are the Pandiyar, Bangari Rawat and Dosadh Bisht. The ancestors of most of the present-day Rajputs of the district migrated to it from the plains at different times as adventurers, refugees, pilgrims or invitees of local chiefs. They, particularly the Chands, had been the *de jure* as well as the *de facto* rulers of almost the whole of Kumaon (including this district) throughout the mediaeval period. The Khasa Rajputs, usually known as Khasiyas, used to be distinguished from other Rajputs by the absence of the sacred thread, but as the danger of censure for wearing it is fast disappearing many of the Khasiyas are beginning to wear it. Beyond the fact that they are still somewhat looked down upon, the Khasiyas suffer from no particular disability and if one can afford the luxury he can marry into the best Rajput families. In the hills caste prejudices being comparatively lax, the Brahmanas and the Rajputs generally have no objection in eating food cooked by a Khasiya. The main subdivisions of the Khasa Rajputs are the Negi, Bisht and Rawat, which appear to have been named after the vocation originally followed by them—*neg* meaning a perquisite and *negi* a receiver thereof; *bisht* (or *visishla*, meaning excellent or respectable) being originally a title rather than a caste name; and *rawat* meaning a ruler or chief and denoting a petty civil official in the service of the raja of Kumaon. The minor subdivisions of these Bith castes usually derive their names from the *thats* or lands on which they were originally settled.

There are only a few Vaishns in the district and they are mostly businessmen and traders and belong chiefly to the Agrawala subcaste. Some of them are known as Sahus or Sahs and other as Chaudhris.

The Shudras of the district are the Doms, now usually designated Shilpkars and listed among the Scheduled Castes in the census returns. They are supposed to be the descendants of the aborigines of this region and are still socially, educationally and economically backward. Their Khasa conquerors reduced them to the status of serfs or slaves who came to constitute the bulk of agricultural labour and village artisans. Even now the population of the district depends chiefly on agriculture, and, as the villages are situated far apart from one another and connected only by narrow hilly paths, each village community had to be self-contained, at least as regards its primary requirements. On the Doms fell most of the hard work

and every village had its own artisans, labourers and menials who performed the work allotted to them for the village community. The Doms thus came to be split up into numerous occupational groups which coming into contact with the Hindu caste system came to be regarded as Shudra subcastes. As many as 18 such groups or subcastes are known in the district of whom the more important ones are the Badi (including the Damjogi or Hurakiya, generally following the vocation of street singers and musicians), Bari (miner), Bhul (oilman), Chamar (also known as Meehi or Basurwa—cobbler and shoemaker), Chauratha (woodcutter), Darji (tailor), Dholi (exorcist), Koli (weaver), Lohar (or Agari, Shaklagar or Tikha—blacksmith), Onjai (darker), Orh (carpenter), Palri (courier) and Tamta (brass and copper smith). The Doms were usually allotted a separate site in a corner of or outside the village, a little removed from the main habitation, and this locality of theirs was called *domoura*. At some places in the district the government have granted plots of land to these Harijans for developing their habitations and these localities are now called Harinagars. Although untouchability is not so rigidly observed in these hills as in the plains, the Sainlpkar community of the district is, by and large, landless and uneducated and its condition has not much improved.

According to the census of 1961, the tahsilwise distribution of the Scheduled Castes is as follows :

Tahsil	Persons	Male	Female
Mansyari	5,652	3,304	2,348
Dharchula	7,573	4,049	3,524
Didihat	22,081	11,050	11,031
Pithoragarh	23,313	11,537	11,776
<b>District Total</b>	<b>58,619</b>	<b>29,940</b>	<b>28,679</b>

Nurtured in a bleak and inhospitable region, the people occupying the northern parts of this district near the borders of Tibet and Nepal are predominantly pastoral and semi-nomadic in their habits and are enterprising traders. For the same reason they are naturally endowed with good behaviour and an adaptive nature and allow a free intermixture with neighbouring peoples. They are a simple, lovable people, with a cheerful outlook on life and their womenfolk

are interpid, hardworking, quick, skillful, bold and independent, doing most of the domestic, pastoral and agricultural work, mixing freely with men and sharing with them the communal life. The inclemency of the climate and the rugged nature of the country make it impossible for the people to rely on agriculture. They, therefore, have been depending mainly on their trade with Tibet, Nepal and the Indian plains. They are generally literate, being able to read and write and keep accounts. As regards religion, they profess to be Hindus and are principally divided into two castes the Rajputs and the Doms, the latter being classed among the Scheduled Castes. On the basis of the *pattis* they inhabit, they are divided into the Joharis (of Johar), Byansis (of Byans), Chaudansis (of Chaudans) and Darmiyas (of Darma). A section of the Joharis call themselves Jethoras (from *jeth*, meaning elder) because they claim to be the descendants of the earliest settlers in this region. They speak the Rankas or Shaukiya Khun dialect, are mostly cultivators and do not migrate. They reside in the *pattis* of Talla Johar and Goriphat of tahsil Mansyari. In the two Johar *pattis* the other subdivisions are the Tolchas, Marchas and Rawats (also known as Shaukas, Shokas or Shopkas), the last being principally traders and of nomadic habits. A majority of the males live in their villages only for short periods, going southwards to Almora, Naini Tal and the Bhabar region for residence and trade in the winter. This winter migration takes place about the middle of October when very often whole villages may be seen to be on the move. Almost all the men with their women and children, their herds and flocks and other belongings move out of the villages which become deserted, and migrate to southern and warmer regions doing trade with wayside towns and villages and attending all the fairs held during that period on or near their paths of communication on both the outward and inward journeys. They are again back at their homes about the middle of April.

The Kuthalia Boras, who inhabit parts of the *pattis* of Askot Malla and Askot Talla, continue to be backward. The name is derived from *kuthla* (haversack, made of hemp fibre), the weaving of which is their chief occupation. They claim to have originally belonged to the district of Kangra (Himachal Pradesh) and to have migrated from there to the Katyur valley (in Almora district) many centuries ago. When the Katyuri empire disintegrated and the Rajwars of Askot set up their separate principality, the Kuthalia Boras accompanied them and settled down in their present habitat. They also claim to be of pure Rajput descent but are considered



inferior by other Rajputs of the region and suffer from certain social disabilities. The reason is said to be that during the summer months they were employed by the Rajwars to fetch snow from the Chhipula mountain, that in order to escape the arduous assignment one day they pretended to have eaten beef by mistake, and that as a result, the then Rajwar declared them outcaste. They do not represent a pure ethnic stock, in their physical features resembling their northern neighbours, and in their speech and, to some extent, in their culture being affiliated with the Khasa Rajputs. The Kuthalia Boras are very enterprising and though primarily an agricultural people, they can turn their hands to many things, such as tending sheep and goat, spinning and weaving wool, making baskets, and mats of *ringal* and shaping millstones for watermills. The position of women among them is inferior to that among the northerners, but better than it is among the Khasas.

The Rajis or Ban Rawats, usually described as 'the wildmen of the forests' and often called Ban-manus (men of the woods) by their civilized neighbours, are an aboriginal tribe inhabiting the forests of Askot in this district. They are still in a low state of civilization and are doubtfully identified as the descendants of the ancient Kiratas or Rajya Kiratas. They themselves profess royal descent and say that their progenitor was an aboriginal prince of Kumaon who had fled with his family to the forests in order to escape destruction threatened by a usurper. To such an extent are they obsessed with this idea that they refuse to salute any one and speak of the Rajwar of Askot as their younger brother. They indignantly repudiate their connection with the Doms whose mere entry into their huts is regarded as an act of defilement which can be removed only by washing the place with water brought from 22 different sources. They are a virile and wandering forest tribe which originally inhabited the Chhipula forest but is now found residing in the forests of the Kali and the Gori rivers in Askot. They speak their own language, the Kirati, live in huts and caves, subsist on wild roots, fish, fowl and beasts, go about almost naked except for a piece of loin cloth, make wooden bowls and some other wooden articles, and their bare possessions are a few rags and a few wooden utensils. They are also experts in the construction of *guls* (small irrigation channels). As they do not possess sufficient land to cultivate whatever little they have is revenue free. They keep on moving from one place to another. The Rajis are shy by nature and do not like to mix with other people. However, their condition is now said to be improving.

**Buddhist**—In 1951, there were 407 Buddhists (219 males and 188 females) in the district, most of whom were trading Tibetans who happened to be here during the census period. At the census of 1961, the number of Buddhists in the district was returned as 1,304 (males 689 and females 615), most of whom appear to have been Tibetan refugees who began arriving in the district in November, 1959 and stayed here as displaced persons till January, 1966 when they were shifted to other parts of the country.

**Muslim**—According to the census of 1961, there are 716 Muslims (408 males and 308 females) residing in the district. They mostly belong to the Sunni sect and except for a few local converts are descendants of immigrants from the plains who came and settled down here at different times during the past.

**Christian**—The Christian population of the district numbers 640 of whom 297 are males and 343 females. Most of them are Indian Christians and are a result of the missionary activities of the London Missionary Society which started work in this region in 1850 and had its headquarters at Pithoragarh. About three decades later, this society ceased to function and its place was taken by the American Methodist Episcopal Church which also made Pithoragarh its headquarters. There is a church at Pithoragarh, another in Chaudans and a third at Berinag. The community is educated and its members are mostly employed in Christian missionary institutions.

**Sikh**—There are only 12 Sikhs (10 males and 2 females) here who came and settled down in the district as refugees from Pakistan after 1946-47.

**Jain**—The number of Jains in the district is only 8 (males 3 and females 5). They are immigrants from the plains, belong to the Agrawal subcaste of the Vaishs and to the Digambara sect of Jainism and are engaged in trade and business.

### Religious Beliefs and Practices

**Hindu**—The vast majority of the people (98.98 per cent of the population) of the district profess popular Hinduism which is a collection of diverse beliefs and practices, ranging from polytheism to absolute monotheism and the identification of the *atman* (individual soul) with the ultimate reality. Orthodox Hinduism of these hills does not differ in any essential from that of the plains and is practised chiefly by the immigrant Brahmanas who worship Vishnu,

Siva, Surya, Ganesa and Shakti. The popular religion, however, includes the worship of many a local godling who are, perhaps, more in evidence here than in other parts of India and include nagas, ghosts and spirits associated with natural phenomena like streams, trees and rocks. For the Khasas, each mountain peak, rivulet and waterfall is connected with a local deity and is surrounded by various legends and superstitions. The villagers offer sacrifices and gifts in order to propitiate these godlings. The worship of Devi, also known as Uma, Parvati, Kali, Durga, Bhavani and Nanda and who is the Shakti or energy of Siva, is very popular among the Khasas. Particularly in the form of Nanda Devi, she is their most favourite deity, her local habitat being supposed to be the great Nanda Devi peak on the western border of the district, while another peak, Nanda Kot, being said to represent her couch. Not far from it is the triple peak of Trisul which is supposed to represent the trident of Siva who has a larger number of devotees in this district than Vishnu has. Naga worship is also prevalent and often a naga shrine (*nagarajatok*) is to be seen outside a village, the most famous naga temple of the district being Berinag (in Baraun). Among the various types of ghosts and spirits worshipped in the district, mention may be made of *bhut* (the ghost of one who died a violent death), *tola* (the ghost of a bachelor), *airi* (the ghost of a person killed in hunting) and *masan* (the ghost of a child). *Acheris* are fairies who bewitch young persons of either sex, *deos* are village godlings or demons, and other popular minor godlings are Bholanath, Ganganath, Bhairava, Kalua, Remia and Goril or Goriya. Although communication with the plains, through pilgrims, visitors and traders, has had a marked influence on the religion of this part of the Himalayas, the belief in spirits and demons, malignant or beneficent, is still implicit and their worship is as general and sincere as that of Siva, Vishnu or Devi, especially among the Doms or Shilpkars whose principal deity is, however, Nirankar. Very often a person is declared possessed and the Jagarias (sorcerers of the Doms) come to his rescue and by means of their witchcraft, which includes singing and dancing wildly, they profess to remove the evil influence of the spirit from the person so possessed. The Kuthalia Boras are completely Hinduised, although they are still to a very great extent influenced by superstitions and a belief in evil spirits. Their principal deity is the goddess Kanar-ki-Debi about whom many legends are current among them. They also worship mountains, wayside rivers and the weather deity; make offerings of the new grain, before it is cooked and eaten by them, to Bhumiyan,





Ek-hathia Deval, Village Thal





Bara Aditya, Village Marh



the tutelary deity of the fields; and believe that the god Gwalde protects their cattle, sheep and goat. The Rajis have neither temples nor gods of their own and recognise the existence of local Hindu deities like Mallikarjun, Huskarnath, Balchand and Nanda Devi as being capable of exercising an influence over them, their offerings to these deities consisting of goats, cooked rice, wild roots, etc. Sometimes offerings are made under a tree to the branches of which pieces of red and white cloth are tied, the ceremony being known as Chandosi. Generally, the Rajis propitiate the gods only when some one among them falls ill. They have no priesthood and bury their dead inside some cave or in a lonely place in the jungle.

The more important of the Hindu holy places, temples and shrines of the district are : Rameshwar, situated on the confluence of the Ramganga and the Sarju, in tahsil Pithoragarh, the two principal temples being those of Siva and Rama and the place being said to be associated with Rama's exile ; Thal, situated on the confluence of the Ramganga and the Barad, in tahsil Didihat, and famous for its temple of Siva known as Baleswar and for another small shrine, called the Hathia Dewal, which is said to have been built in one night by a single mason who used only one hand in building the shrine out of a single block of stone ; Jauljibi (Jara-jibli), situated on the confluence of the rivers Gori and Kali, in tahsil Dierchula, and famous for its Siva temple ; the big temple of Kalika or Kali, at Gangolihat in tahsil Pithoragarh; the temple of Devi at Kotgari in tahsil Didihat; the temple of Berinag dedicated to the Naga king, at Berinag ; the cave temples of Patal Bhavaneswar in tahsil Didihat, some 11 km. east of Gangolihat, which are supposed to be dedicated to Siva ; temple of Nanda Devi, the presiding deity of the region, on the Nanda Devi mountain; Pacheshwar, situated on the confluence of the Kali and the Ramganga, in tahsil Pithoragarh, and famous for its Siva temple; and Thal Kedar in tahsil Pithoragarh with its temple of Kedarnath or Siva.

**Buddhist**—There is practically no permanent Buddhist population in the district, those returned as Buddhists at the census representing for the most part Tibetan refugees or traders residing temporarily in the northern region. They follow Mahayana Buddhism and have no notable centre in the district.

**Muslim**—The Muslims of the district are practically all Sunnis and, although not very orthodox, they try to observe the five injunctions of the *Quran*.

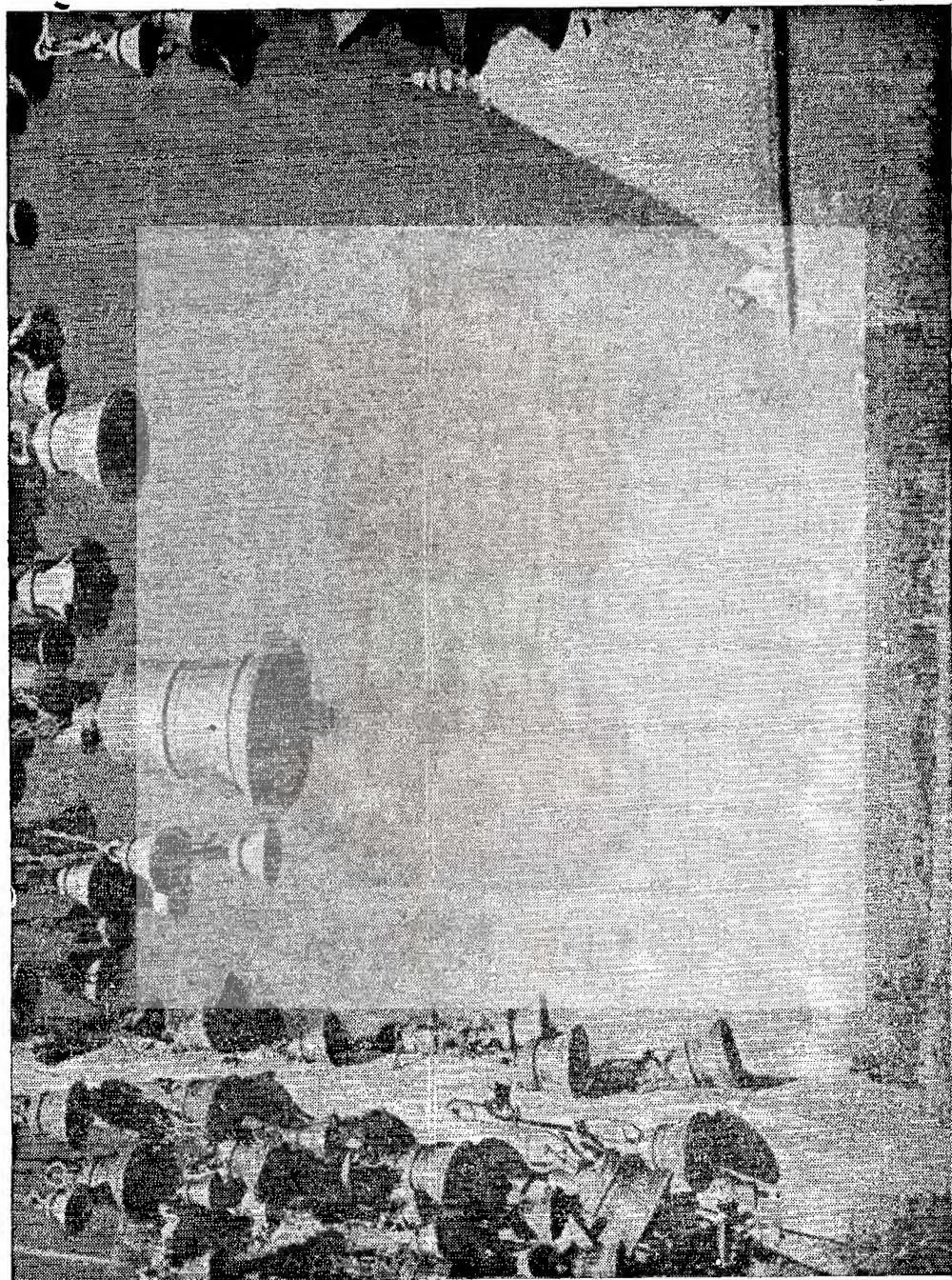
**Christian**—The Christians of the district are mostly converts, belong to the protestant sect and are guided by the American Methodist Episcopal Church. They have several churches in the district, located at Pithoragarh, Berinag and Chaudans.

**Sikh and Jain**—The followers of these religions are too few in the district to deserve mention, their beliefs and practices being those followed by their coreligionists elsewhere.

### Festivals and Fairs

**Hindu**—Almost all the principal Hindu festivals are celebrated by the people of the district, though with local modifications and variations. The Chaitra-navaratra, first 9 days of the bright half of Chaitra (April), is a period sacred to Devi when she is especially worshipped. The eighth of these days is designated Nanda-ashtmi when a fair is held in honour of the goddess Nanda Devi in the village of Martoli (in *patti* Malla Johar) and another at the temple of Hakra Devi in the village of Hakra (*patti* Talla Johar). The ninth day of that period is known as Ramnavami when Rama's birth is celebrated by observing fast and reciting the *katha* (*Ramayana*), particularly at the temple of Rama in Rameshwar. The Vishvat-sankranti (April 13) is an occasion for bathing fairs held at several places, especially on the confluences of rivers in the district, and for the Devi fair held at Kotgari. On Vaishakhi-purnima (full-moon day of Vaisakh) a big bathing fair is held at Pacheshwar. Nagpanchami (5th day of bright half of Sravana) is celebrated by worshipping and propitiating the nagas (snakes and serpents) and fairs are held at Mostmanu, Dhoolnag and Berinag. On the 15th day of that fortnight falls the Rakshabandhan when sisters tie *rakhi* (thread of protection) round the wrists of their brothers and the Brahmanas change their *janeo* (sacred thread). Janmashtami, the birthday of Krishna, is celebrated on the eighth day in the dark half of Bhadra but, it appears, there are few devotees of the god in the district. The first nine days of the bright half of Asvina are known as the Shardiya-navaratra, which are sacred to Devi and at this time fairs are held at all the temples of the goddess. The fair held at the temple of Kalika Devi in Gangolihat is the biggest and the most important. Dipavali, the festival of light, is celebrated with usual eclat on the 15th of the dark half of Kartika. Makar-sankranti, which usually falls on January 14, is celebrated as a great festival in the district and big bathing fairs are held on this occasion at holy places like Pacheshwar, Rameshwar and Thal. Shivaratri, in honour of Siva, is also celebrated all





**Dhwaj Temple, Village Dhwaj**



over the district, people keeping fast and worshipping the god and fairs being held at important Siva temples, particularly at Dhawaj (Dhaj) and Thal Kedar. Towards the end of the month of Phalguna the gay Holi festival is celebrated with sprinkling of coloured water, and singing and dancing which last for about five days. About sixteen big fairs are held every year at different occasions and places in the district, of which those held at Dhawaj, Jauljibi, Lachhera, Mostmanu, Pacheshwar, Rameshwar, Thal and Thal Kedar are supposed to have a prominently religious significance.

The Kuthalia Boras celebrate the annual festival of their principal deity, Kanar-ki-Debi, and seasonal festivals, such as, Basant Panchmi, heralding the advent of spring ; Haryala (on the 1st day of Sravana), marking the advent of the rainy season; and Khataruwa to mark the arrival of winter.

Others—Other religious communities of the district are so small that the celebration of their festivals, etc., hardly attracts public notice. The Buddhists celebrate the Buddha-purnima in honour of the Buddha on the full-moon day of Vaisakh ; the Muslims celebrate their two Ids, Barawafat, Muharram and Shab-e-barat; the Christian have Christmas and Easter ; for the Sikhs the important days are the birthdays of their gurus, Nanak and Govind Singh; and the sacred days for the Jains are the Paryushana (last 10 days of Bhadra) and the birthday of the *tirthankara* Mahavira.

## SOCIAL LIFE

### Property and Inheritance

In this district, succession and inheritance to property are governed by the same laws as are applicable elsewhere in the State of Uttar Pradesh. The Hindu Succession Act, 1956, governs the Hindus (including Jains and Sikhs), the Muslims are governed by their personal law of succession and inheritance and the Christians by the Indian Succession Act, 1925. The Kumaun and Uttarakhand Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1960, has also been enforced in the district since July, 1966, and now regulates the succession to and partition of agricultural holdings.

In spite of these laws certain local customs, traditions and usages affecting succession and inheritance still persist in this area. The Hindu Succession Act provides for the succession and inheritance of female heirs to coparcenary property, but in practice daughters seldom get a share in their father's property. According to the custom known as Jethon, the eldest among the brothers is given a bigger

share in inheritance if there is a partition. Similarly, the Malgujeri-bant provided for an extra field or portion of land to be given by the landholders of the village to its *malgujar* (person responsible for payment of revenue to government on behalf of the whole village). This extra land is inherited by the *malgujar's* eldest son who usually acts as *malgujar* after his father's death. The Sautja-bant system requires that the property of the deceased be equally divided among his widows ; in case there are more than one, the sons of each of them should share equally their mother's inheritance. If a man dies issueless his widow can take a Tekwa (lover or kept man) who will live with her and look after her property. Her children by him and if there are no children then he himself will inherit her property after her death. In case a man has no son but only one or more daughters he will try to marry one of the daughters to a person who agrees to live with his father-in-law for life. Such a son-in-law is called Ghar-jawain and he along with his wife will inherit the property of the father-in-law after the latter's death. A person, the identity of whose father is not known, has, no right to any property. With the advance of education, government legislation and changing conditions, these customs are fast disappearing, although examples of the application of these old Khasa local laws may still be seen here and there. Adoption is also regular and a man or his widow can adopt a son and designate him heir to the estate. The pattern of the family, almost everywhere in the district, is patriarchal, but after the death of the head of the family, his wife usually steps into her husband's shoes and manages the affairs of the family as its head. The joint family system has been prevalent here as elsewhere among the Hindus of the State, but it is now gradually breaking down due to personal, social and economic factors, the impact of modern ideas and the growing individualistic outlook of younger people. Formerly, most of the people depended on agriculture alone and all the members of a joint family lived together and worked together in their fields, but land being limited, young people, particularly if they are educated, look for other jobs. Economic exigencies are now forcing them to leave their village homes and try their luck elsewhere. Rapid growth of industrialisation involving increasing demands on labour and the prospects of better wages encourages many of them to go out even to the plains. Opportunities and scope of employment in various fields have widened and it often happens that soon after marriage, a young man goes out of the family of his father or brothers and makes a separate home for himself and his wife.

# Marriage and Morals

According to the census of 1961, out of the total population of 2,63,579 in the district there were 1,28,292 males and 1,35,287 females, their distribution among the unmarried, married, widowed, divorced and separated or separated, with respect to different age-groups, being as given below :

Age-group	Unmarried		Married		Widowed		Divorced or separated		Unspecified	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-09	35,560	38,505	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
10-14	16,686	12,836	367	2,736	2	11	4	..	5	6
15-19	9,118	2,221	2,323	11,199	6	60	4	35	5	8
20-24	3,400	339	5,856	11,684	28	196	18	58	1	7
25-29	1,111	150	7,127	10,224	84	324	31	65	2	4
30-34	522	92	6,686	8,284	108	617	28	53	5	8
35-39	183	37	6,789	6,363	168	807	28	20	2	3
40-44	120	46	5,375	5,418	236	1,150	29	46	3	5
45-49	96	29	4,972	3,903	314	1,362	19	18	..	3
50-54	111	25	4,915	3,428	439	1,909	18	35	..	1
55-59	66	20	3,472	1,763	503	1,524	11	13	..	..
60-64	51	10	3,270	1,261	635	2,163	15	18	1	2
65-69	35	8	1,643	417	446	1,157	8	13	1	..
70 and above	22	16	2,167	332	1,032	2,235	10	5	..	..
Totals	70,081	54,334	53,962	67,012	4,001	13,515	223	379	25	47

Thus according to the census of 1961, out of the total population of the district 47.2 per cent were unmarried, 45.9 per cent were married, 6.6 per cent were widows and widowers, and 0.22 per cent were divorced or separated. The corresponding percentages among the males were 54.6, 42.1, 3.1 and 0.17 respectively, and those among the females were 40.2, 49.5, 10.0 and 0.28 respectively. Of the married males, 64.6 per cent were in the age-groups from 25 to 54, those under 25 being 15.8 per cent and those above 55 being 19.5 per cent. Among married females those in the age-groups from 15 to 54 were as many as 90.0 per cent, those under 15 being 4.1 per cent and those above 55 being 5.6 per cent. Among persons of both sexes aged 35 years and over, 0.97 per cent of the males and 0.35 per cent of the females were not married. There were no married persons under the ages of 9, but in the age-group 10—14 there were 0.68 per cent among the males and 4.08 per cent among the females who were married, which shows that early marriage, particularly among the girls, is still prevalent in the district to some extent. The female population (51.3 per cent) is a little more than the male population (48.6 per cent) and the number of married females (67,012), is also bigger than that of married males (53,962), which indicates that a number of men in the district must have had more than one wife at a time. The number of widowed females (13,515) is more than three times of that of widowed males (4,001), showing that there are still many women in the district who do not like to remarry after becoming widowed.

For the Hindus here, as elsewhere, marriage is a sacrament, its rites being prescribed in the *Dharmashastras* (or law books) and regulated to an extent by custom and tradition which vary from caste to caste and sometimes from family to family within a caste.

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, prescribes the minimum age for marriage as 18 years in the case of the bridegroom and 15 in that of the bride, provided that in the event of the latter not having completed the age of 18 the consent of her guardian has to be obtained. Polygamy has been made illegal and the customary restrictions, such as those on inter-caste and inter-subcaste marriages and even on those between persons belonging to the same *gotra* (eponymous group descended from a common ancestor in the male line of descent), have also been abolished, but a marriage between *sapindas* (literally, having the same *pinda* or funeral cake : agnates within 7 generations) is still held invalid. This Act applies to the Jains and Sikhs as well.



In spite of legislation to the contrary, cases of early marriage and polygamy are still to be seen in the district. The reasons for the prevalence of the latter practice are, perhaps, the comparatively greater number of females in the population and the considerable economic usefulness of the female members in the family, who work hard in the field and participate in other activities connected with agriculture besides doing domestic chores. Cases of polyandry are conspicuous by their absence in this district.

The usual practice is to marry within the caste and even the sub-caste, but instances of inter-subcaste and even inter-caste marriages are not uncommon, particularly among the Khasas, and are accepted by society. Even when a man marries a woman belonging to a caste lower than that of his own, no stigma is generally attached to such a marriage although it is not looked upon with favour either.

Broadly speaking, the ceremonies performed in marriage are almost of a similar nature among the people of different castes. A marriage is contracted by the mutual consent of the parents or guardians of the boy and the girl. The offer, particularly among higher caste people, comes from the guardian of the bride-to-be, and on its being accepted by the guardian of the bridegroom-to-be, the *tilak* (betrothal ceremony) follows. After that, on some auspicious day, usually fixed by the priest-cum-astrologer, the bridegroom with his kinsmen and friends goes to the bride's house, often in a procession, and there the ceremony is performed, the *bhanwar* (circumambulating the sacred fire seven times), the *gathbandhan* (tying the knot), and the *kanyadan* (giving away of the bride) being the essentials of a marriage. The bridegroom and his party are then feasted and the next morning the bride is taken away to the bridegroom's house.

Among the members of the Scheduled Castes (Doms or Shilpkars), and sometimes among the Khasas as well, marriage by purchase of the bride, that is, by giving to her guardian the 'bride's money' agreed upon also takes place. A kept woman (*dhanti*) is also considered for all practical purposes a wife. Among the Shudras the marriage rites are not so elaborate as among the higher castes; people eat and drink together on the occasion and the marriage is considered final.

Among the inhabitants of the northern *pattis* the system is different and generally takes one of three forms. In the first the father of the boy goes to the girl's parents with the offer of marriage and some food as a present. If the girl's guardian accepts the proposal, marriage is deemed to be settled and the ceremony is performed when

the girl has attained the age of five years or more. The second type is marriage-by-force in which case the boy induces the girl to run away from her parents' house and take shelter in that of his own. After a week or so, accompanied by some old and responsible persons of his own family and village, he visits the house of the girl's parents and prays for her hand, the action being known as *vinti* (prayer). If the girl's people are agreeable, the marriage is performed, and to celebrate the occasion, drinks are freely consumed. The third type is the marriage by choice, which is contracted by mature girls and boys of their own mutual free will.

The Kuthalia Boras are by and large monogamous, although those who can afford it take a second wife, because this increases the working capacity of the family to a considerable degree. Cases of levirate are also to be found among them; they do not object to a man marrying the widow of his dead brother. If he does not wish to marry her, he has still to support her, and if she wants to marry some other man she must obtain the consent of her brother-in-law to do so, because she is considered to be the property of the family. Sororate is also prevalent, but it is not compulsory that one should marry his wife's sister. Concubines may be kept without observing any ceremony, the practice being known as *dhanti*. Similarly a woman, specially a widow, can keep a man as husband, known as *lekwa*, without undergoing the formalities of a marriage. Bride's price is also paid to her guardian at the time of the marriage. The last three customs resemble those of the Khase Rajputs. The customary age for marriage is 12 for the boy and 10 for the girl. On some auspicious day the groom's father, along with his friends and relatives, visits the bride's father, presents to him some silver ornaments and his relatives apply a paste of rice and curd on the forehead of the bride, the ceremony being known as *shahimasu*. Then on a day fixed by the Brahmana priests, either the bridegroom goes to the bride's house or she herself, accompanied by her brothers or other male relatives, goes to his house and the marriage is performed.

The Rajis are also monogamous and, as there is no clan or caste system among them, all the members of the tribe consider themselves equal to one another and intermarry freely. Both sororate and junior levirate are practised, probably as remnants of polyandry which is said to have been once prevalent among these people. If a man can afford it, he may have more wives than one, but this is very rarely done. Infant marriage is viewed with disfavour and only when both the boy and the girl attain puberty are they allowed to marry.

First cousin marriage is considered objectionable, but a man can marry his maternal uncle's daughter. Due to paucity of girls, cross-cousin marriages have also begun to take place. Marriage is arranged by the parents of both the parties and the payment by the groom's father of part of the bride's price (usually Rs. 50 or so) is deemed to be an irrevocable betrothal. Then, on a fixed day, the groom and his party go to the bride's house and the ceremony is performed with simplicity amidst festivities lasting for a day only.

The Muslims of the district perform their marriage in accordance with their personal law, as elsewhere.

Among the Christians marriages are governed by the Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872, as amended in 1952, and are often performed in churches.

**Dowry**—The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, has made the giving and accepting of dowry illegal, but the practice still persists in the district as in other parts of India, although it seems to have never assumed such an undesirable form in these parts as in the plains. Higher caste people usually give dowry at the time of their daughters' marriages, but it is given of one's own free will according to his status or financial condition and usually takes the form of clothes, ornaments and household goods, but very seldom cash. In certain communities, like the Shilpkars, Kuthalia Beras and the Rajis, instead of the bride's parents the bridegroom's parents give a sort of dowry in the form of bride's price. Among the Rajis the only dowry given by the bride's father to the groom and herself consists of a *bhycka* (hoe) for digging up wild roots, a *godyo* (axe) for felling trees, a *kutya* (ladze) for making wooden bowls and an *ansi* (sickle), implements inextricably interwoven with a Raji's daily life.

**Civil Marriage**—The Special Marriage Act, 1954, provides for the performance and registration of a marriage by a marriage officer appointed in the district by government. Caste, religion or a difference in religion are no bar to such marriages. During the last five years only one marriage, that of a Hindu teacher with a Muslim maiden of Askot, is known to have been solemnised (in August, 1965) in this district under this Act.

**Widow Marriage**—Notwithstanding the Hindu Widow Marriage Act, 1956, which makes widow remarriage among the Hindus legal, the Brahmanas, Vaishis and some sections of the Rajputs of the district still do not approve of this practice and it is very seldom that



a widow among them gets remarried. Her offspring by the second husband is usually called a *bhanjeta* and is looked down upon in society. Among the Khases, a widow generally prefers to live as a *dhanti* (kept woman) of a man of her choice, or, if she is herself in well-to-do circumstances, she keeps with her a *tekwa* (male supporter) who serves the purpose of a husband. Among the Shilpkars, the Rajis and the inhabitants of northern *pattis* remarriage of a widow is a common feature and no stigma is attached to such a marriage. A Kuthalia Bora widow usually marries her deceased husband's brother, but, if he is not willing, she marries with his consent somebody else of her choice. She may also live as a *dhanti* or take a *tekwa*.

**Divorce**—The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, also provides for divorce or dissolution of marriage, but from 1961 to 1965 only 5 cases, one each in 1961 and 1962 and 3 in 1965, all instituted by husbands, are known to have been filed in court, though in none of them divorce appears to have been granted. Apart from law, there is a regular custom in the district, particularly among the residents of northern *pattis* and the Shilpkars, according to which a wife can seek *talawa* (deed of relinquishment) from her husband and marry another man. Among the Kuthalia Boras, however, the second husband is required to pay bride's price to the divorced husband. Divorce is, however, permissible in all these cases.

**Prostitution and Traffic in Woman**—Prior to the enactment of the Nayak Girls' Protection Act, 1956, girls and women of the Nayak community of the Pithoragarh tahsil, used to act as regular prostitutes, the chief centres being the villages of Sinheoda, Nakinanayak and Sintoli of *patti* Sethi Talla, village Chaupekha of *patti* Saun and the Pithoragarh bazar. The estimated number of these prostitutes was between 70 and 75. In order to eradicate this evil, the above-mentioned Act was passed and enforced in the district since the date of its notification. The result is that now there are no regular prostitutes or centres of prostitution in the district, nor any cases of traffic in women have come to notice in recent years, involving prosecution under this Act or under the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956.

**Gambling**—Gambling is not unknown to the district and many people indulge in it during the winter months when they have little else to do, special occasions being the Divali festival and certain fairs like those of Rameshwar, Koteshwar and Chandikaghat. The Public Gambling Act, 1867, as amended in 1952 and 1962 for U. P., makes

gambling in public an offence. The police remain on the alert and gambling, which, perhaps, never had assumed the form of a grave public nuisance, has been on the decline. During the five years ending with 1965, only five cases of prosecution, resulting in conviction, have been reported from the entire district, two in 1963 from tahsil Didihat and two in 1964 and one in 1965 from tahsil Pithoragarh.

### Home-life

According to the census of 1961, the 'institutional population' of the district was only 29, all males, and living in tahsil Dharchula. The 'houseless population' was only 46, of whom one male belonged to tahsil Mansyari and 24 males and 21 females to tahsil Dharchula. The rest of the population of the district consisted of households\* living in houses. The number of occupied residential houses was 49,873, the tahsilwise break-up being 5,497 in Mansyari, 5,880 in Dharchula, 18,409 in Didihat and 20,087 in Pithoragarh. The number of persons per occupied house comes to about 5.3, as against the State figure of 6. The percentage of households to the number of houses is 105.7, which gives about 5 persons per household. In tahsil Didihat this percentage is 100.8, which is the lowest not only in this district but in the entire State. The density of households in the district is 7.4 per sq. km.

**Houses**—According to the census of 1961, there is no town or urban area in the district and the bulk of the population lives in small villages, 39.3 per cent living in those with a population under 200 each, which are as many as 1,243 out of 1,668 (total number of inhabited villages) and 40.2 per cent in those with populations between 200 and 499. The biggest habitation is Pithoragarh itself which is the headquarters of the district and may, therefore, be called a township. The ideal site for a village is considered to be a somewhat level ground half way up an airy spur with ample cultivable land on the slopes higher up as well as lower down and, if possible, at least a two-fold water-supply, because the Doms living in a separate part of the village are not allowed to use the water (springs, etc.) reserved for the use of others. The houses are generally arranged in neat rows and there is no overcrowding. Some people built their houses in the middle of their holdings and thus live away and apart from the village proper. The houses of the Doms are generally one-storeyed but those of the rest are as a rule two-storeyed and

\*As per census definition, a household is a group of persons who commonly live together and take their meals from a common kitchen.

many a time three-storeyed. They are solidly built, usually of stone with clay used as cement and roofed with slate, sometimes with tinned iron sheets also, and in wilder parts with shingles of pine wood. Poorer people often have thatched roofs over their huts. The roofs are almost invariably sloping. In a multistoreyed house, the ground floor is called the *goth* and is usually used for keeping the cattle. Those who can afford it, build separate cattle sheds near the house. The well-to-do surround their dwellings with a paved courtyard or compound, bordered with fruit trees and protected on the khud side by a low parapet wall. Wood is used in doors and windows and the houses are generally white-washed on the outside. At important places, here and there, some modern concrete cement structures are also now to be seen, especially in the Pithoragarh township where new buildings have to be constructed in accordance with the master plan enforced there. Some dwellings also have kitchen gardens attached to them. The wood used in doors, windows, balconies, ceilings, etc., is often carved with beautiful designs. Generally the people are not sanitation conscious and big heaps of manure and sweepings may be seen lying in front of houses for months together, it being removed to the fields only twice or thrice a year. As regards the Rajis, they live in extremely small villages, each containing on an average five to six families. Formerly they used to shift the sites of their villages from time to time, but now there is a tendency towards settling down permanently. They live in small, simple and temporary huts, with thatched roofs and walls made of wattle and timber. The frame consists of wooden poles which are lashed together with hemp. Sometimes they seek refuge in rock shelters or caves called *udyar*. Often two or three huts are joined together and sometimes there are as many as seven or eight huts in a row. In some cases a separate hut is used as a cattle shed, but usually the cattle, goats and human beings share the same hut.

**Furniture and Decoration**—The people of the district are, as a rule, simple rural folk and comparatively poor. Only a few educated and well-off families have chairs, tables, almirahs, curtains and some other modern furnishings in their dwellings. The rest of the people use simple cots, mats, wooden stools and benches or *chowkis*. On the wooden lintel above the main entrance to the house, one may often find a swastika, or the figure of Ganesa or of some other divinity carved in the wood. Sometimes carved stones are also used in building the front face of the house. The interior is decorated by cheap pictures of gods and goddesses hanging on the walls. The dwellings inside are





**A Woman of Patti Byans Weaving Woollen Carpet**



generally neat and clean but not spacious enough to accommodate much furniture. Flower and fruit trees are often found adorning the compound outside.

**Food**—Except for a few orthodox Brahmanas and the Vaishs, the people of the district are in general non-vegetarians, yet meat is not their staple food. The common food of the people consists of chupaties, boiled rice, dal and vegetables or meat. They generally subsist on coarse grain like *mandua*, *jhangora*, millets, barley and maize, pulses, potatoes and local vegetables. Dried meat and *sattoo* (flour of parched grain) is the common food of the residents of the northern tracts who always keep in reserve these two commodities whether at home or on journey. Their favourite drinks are country liquor, *jya* (a sort of tea mixed with ghee and rice) and *jan* (beer) which is also considered to be a holy drink and is manufactured in every household. The Rajis depend on game, fish and wild roots besides *mandua* and rice which they themselves grow by primitive methods. Tobacco smoking is very common among the people of the district and so is tea drinking.

**Dress**—In the southern tahsils of Didihat and Pithoragarh people generally use cotton fabrics except during the cold winter months. A man usually wears pyjamas or trousers, shirt, coat and a small Kumauni cap. Some Brahmanas are still seen wearing dhoti and pagri. The women generally wear a tight-fitting bodice or jacket (*angai*), preferably of velvet, over a blouse (*choli*) or shirt and a loose chintz skirt (*lahanga* or *ghagra*) one end of which is often tucked into the waist-band. Sometimes they also wear a big scarf which covers the breasts in front where it is kept in position by bringing the other end over the right shoulder and attaching it in such a manner as to leave both the shoulders and arms bare. The sari is coming into fashion among the sophisticated. The women move about mostly with their heads uncovered. Coloured dresses are the fashion, red, blue and green being the more popular colours. Further north, in the Johar, Darma and Askot regions, people are generally dressed in single pieces of blanket-cloth, secured by brass pins on either shoulder. The hair is worn long, curling picturesquely over the ears and the neck. Women allow their hair to hang down the back in pig-tails. They do not cover their heads, but when working in the snow, carrying loads, etc., they wear a piece of cloth folded round the head like a pagri. Still further north, men wear trousers and frock coats of hemp. Their womenfolk wear an *angri* (jacket) over a full shirt, a *lahanga* (skirt) around which a black cloth (*kamala*)

is wrapped, a long and broad piece of cloth tied around the waist and an embroidered white scarf (*khopi*) over their head. Both men and women wear shoes and often socks as well. About the Rajis, it is said that formerly they used to go about naked, but now they have taken to scanty clothing which consists of a few torn rags usually obtained from their neighbours in exchange for wooden bowls or for some other service done.

**Jewellery**—In this district, men rarely wear ornaments except, in some cases, a finger ring. Womenfolk are, however, fond of jewellery and wear *guluband* (collar), *har* (necklace), fillet, armlets, bangles (*churian*), finger rings, nose-rings (*nathia*) or nose-studs (*phulli*), ear-rings or ear-pendants (*karnaphool* or *jhumka*), etc. Rajput women usually wear a silver *suta* around the neck, silver *ghagulas* on the wrists and a *bulaki* in the nose, particularly those living in the Shor and Askot regions of tahsil Pithoragarh. The ornaments are generally made of gold, silver or rolled gold and studded with semi-precious stones or glass.

### Communal Life

**Recreations**—The inhabitants of the district have been leading a hard and simple life, almost cut off from and uninfluenced by the outside world and have, therefore, been able to preserve their local culture and traditions, folk-songs and folk-dances, their festivals and fairs, and games and recreations, which relieve the monotony of life and provide relaxation and amusement.

The popular types of folk-dances of the district are known as the *ahholia*, *dhuska*, *Champhuli*, *chhapaili*, *dhurang* and *thulkhal*. The magnetic pull of the ever changing beauty of natural surroundings makes the dwellers of this region sing and dance very frequently. Girls in groups, wearing their traditional gay-coloured clothes and silver ornaments and working in their fields with sickles in hand, are often found singing and dancing, forgetting the day-long fatigue and sense of loneliness. They dance back to their homes with sickles tied to the waist and sheaves of corn or grass balanced on their heads, singing all the way and cutting jokes or exchanging repartees with young men who happen to cross their path. Festivals and fairs are special occasions for singing and dancing. Sometimes men are seen dancing in pairs, one of the pair being made up as a woman with a coloured handkerchief in one hand and a small mirror in the other. While dancing they sing romantic songs, often composed on the spot by their ready wit, which are





Two Girls from Northern Pattis

replied to by another pair, the whole affair being known as *jor-band-hana*. The duets are sung first by the pair and the refrain is repeated by the whole party. Groups of youngmen and youngwomen, with hands joined, may also be seen dancing in a circle with a drummer or Hurkiya in the centre. Young lasses in multi-coloured dresses and heavily ornamented with silver jewellery with their rosy cheeks, innocent looks and rhythmic movements, present an enchanting picture and give a romantic touch to a fair.

Folk-songs of the district are also of a considerable variety and are often in the form of *panwaras* (long ballads) narrating some romantic story. The more popular ones are the *malusahi*, *ramola*, *jhorha*, *baira* or *bhagnola*, *ghuraili*, *phag*, *chanchari*, *nyoti* and *hurikiya-bol*. The new year commences in the month of Chaitra with the advent of the spring season which is celebrated for the next two months with merrymaking, singing, dancing and folk-music. The Hurkiya (local musician or drummer) comes to every house and sings, to the accompaniment of musical instruments like the *hurka*, *sarangi* and *binai*, the song of the season which is known as *chaiti* or *ritu-raen*. It is considered auspicious to hear the name of the month of Chaitra at the beginning of the year through the lips of the Hurkiya. The Information Department of the government also arranges annually a number of cultural programmes to encourage the traditional folk-songs and folk-dances.

The indigenous sports and games are *ankh-michauni* (hide and seek), *bagh-bakri* (tiger and goat), *dhama* (stone throwing), *gyal-tyo-chham* (one-legged race), *kabaddi* or *dudu*, *gavaldyo*, *gulli-danda*, *giti*, *addu*, *bharat* and *dibti-balla-duma-lo*. Hunting and fishing also provide sport for some. Among indoor games may be mentioned *chaupar*, playing cards, chess and carrom. A sports committee has also been established in the district which provides training in the various indigenous sports and modern games like football, volley ball, badminton, cricket and basket ball to the young people of the district.

There are two cinemas in the district; the Nataraj in Pithoragarh town has a seating capacity of 556 and the touring cinema of the Dharchula development block has at its headquarters a seating accommodation for 476 persons. There were 1,165 radio sets in the district by the end of 1965, to which 291 were added in 1966. Besides the traditional religious fairs, *kisan-melas* (peasant fairs) and



development exhibitions are arranged every year at the headquarters of different development blocks. A defence fair has also begun to be held at Pithoragarh in the month of October.

In these fairs documentary film shows, puppet shows, distribution of literature, sports and games are arranged for the benefit of the public.

Besides the district branch of the Prantiya Rakshak Dal, there are 134 Yuvak Mangal Dals (youth clubs) with a membership of 3,864, which arrange programmes for the instruction and recreation of the local population. A district Bal Kalyan Parishad (child welfare society) has also been established and several Mahila Mangal Dals (women's welfare clubs) are also functioning.

### Impact of Zamindari Abolition

The Kumaun and Uttarakhand Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1960, has been enforced in the district only since July 1, 1966. It is too early to assess the impact of this Act on the social and economic condition of the people. There were no big zamindars in the district except, perhaps, one or two, but there were many small landholders. In place of a number of different types of landholders or landed proprietors, generally known as *hissedars*, and of tenants (*khaikars*, etc.) a number of *bhumidhars* and *sirdars* have come into being. The old *sirtans* (tenants at will) have become *assamis*. Their self-respect and status has improved as now they are the masters of their land and have direct dealings with the government. Many Brahmanas and even some Rajputs, who considered it below dignity to touch the plough and do the ordinary cultivator's chores, are finding it difficult to adjust themselves to the times and many of them are taking to different professions or going away from their homes in search of employment in the military, civil or private services or in business or industry. Differences of high and low between people of one caste and another have also begun to disappear.



## CHAPTER IV

### AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION

#### LAND RECLAMATION AND UTILISATION

The bigger part of the district lies under perpetual snow and a considerable area is rocky and barren. Cultivation is, therefore, limited to the river valleys and the gently sloping hills. The usual limit of cultivation is up to about 2,000 m. above sea-level, but certain crops are also grown up to a height of about 2,750 m. Owing to increase in population, the forests in the valleys and on hill slopes have been gradually cleared and more and more land is being brought under the plough. The cultivated area, which was 10,75,592 *nalis* and 9 *mutthis* at the Settlement of 1900—1902, had increased to 24,13,955 *nalis* and 1 *mutthi* (48,844.7 hectares) at the Settlement of 1964-65, which was about 6.6 per cent of the total area and 24 per cent of the total measured area of the district.

For centuries, the gently sloping hillsides have been brought under the plough by way of terracing. Stones down the slope are built into a wall and the upper part is excavated until the whole becomes approximately level. As the crust of the soil is very shallow on most of the hillsides, this operation is not carried out simultaneously, but during the first year, only a small wall is built up and a small excavation made, the operation being completed in course of time by weather, tilth and diluvion from higher fields. Most of the villages are situated about half way up the ridges, which aids the cultivation of arable lands situated both below and above the village, the best lands existing lower down. These terraces cost a vast amount of labour and capital to make and maintain. Mr. Goudge, who conducted the Settlement of 1900—1902, writes : "The most distinguishing characteristic of hill cultivation is the continued improvement in existing terraces. Every year's ploughing removes more stones, improves and strengthens the retaining walls, levels the slopes and makes the crop more remunerative. The labour involved is of course very great and the least neglect results in an overgrowth of the thorn bushes, wild raspberry, barberry, *ghingaru* and other scrub jungle which grow so quickly and profusely in the hills." At places, where the slope is so steep that it cannot be cultivated with the help of bullocks and

ploughs, the practice of cultivation is known as *katil* and consists in burning the scrubs and bushes after which the land is turned over with the help of a hoe and sown. After the harvest, the land is allowed to lie fallow for three or four years.

### Cultivated Area

According to the Settlement of 1964-65, the total cultivated area in the district was 24,13,955 *nalis* and 1 *mutthi* (48,844.7 hectares) of which the assessed cultivated area was 20,89,345 *nalis* and 15 *mutthis* (42,276.2 hectares).

### Culturable Waste

At the time of the Settlement of 1900—1902, only the cultivated area was measured. During the Settlement of 1964-65, the measured area was 89,88,565 *nalis* (1,81,877.2 hectares) about 28.5 per cent of the total area of the district. The remaining area which was covered with perpetual snow and forest was left unmeasured. Out of the measured area 65,74,609 *nalis* and 12 *mutthis* (1,33,032.4 hectares), about 73 per cent were barren, covered with forests or water or occupied by habitation, roads, buildings and burial grounds.

### IRRIGATION

Besides height and aspect, cultivation in the hills depends very much on irrigational facilities. The worst land if capable of being irrigated is often of more value than the best land unirrigated. At the time of the Settlement of 1900—1902, the irrigated area of the district was 1,96,514 *nalis* and 9 *mutthis* (or 18.3 per cent of the total cultivated area) the unirrigated area being 8,79,078 *nalis* (or 81.7 per cent of the total cultivated area). According to the Settlement report of 1964-65 the irrigated area in the district was 3,96,531 *nalis* and 7 *mutthis* (8,023.3 hectares), or 16.5 per cent of the total cultivated area. Thus an additional area of 2,00,016 *nalis* and 14 *mutthis* (4,046.8 hectares) was brought under irrigation during the period of 62 years, which shows an increase of 102 per cent over the irrigated area of 1900-1902.

### AGRICULTURE INCLUDING HORTICULTURE

#### Soils

Cultivation in the hills depends upon factors like height and aspect and irrigational facilities, rather than on the composition of soils. The northern slopes of the hills are less abrupt and less denuded by the action of rain than the southern slopes. Lands with a north aspect, therefore, are more cheaply excavated for turning into

fields, which when made, contain thicker and richer soils, and, not being exposed so much to the solar heat, retain moisture for a longer period. But most of the soils are poor, shallow and stony. According to the Settlement of 1964-65, the cultivated land of the district has been classified into five classes, *talaon*, *upraon I*, *upraon II*, *ijran* and *khil* or *katil*.

The *talaon* lands are found nearly in all the villages of the district, and area under them, which was 1,96,514 *nalis* and 1 *mutthi* in 1900—1902, increased to 3,70,593 *nalis* and 9 *mutthis* (7,498.4 hectares) in 1964-65, showing an increase of about 89 per cent during a period of 62 years. The *talaon* lands again are of two kinds, the *sera* and the *panchar*. In the first, the water-supply is perennial and the fields are carefully levelled and can be flooded with 2 cm. to 5 cm. of water, when required. This kind of land is usually sown with the finest rice and occurs generally lower down near the irrigating stream. The soil being fertile, and the water-supply and heat being constant, these lands are the richest and most productive. Where the water is apt to be scanty, except during and immediately after the rains paddy is sown in seedbeds at the proper season (usually April) and transplanted into other fields with the advent of the rains, when the stream has increased in volume sufficiently to flood the whole of the *sera*. Some part of this land is known as *simar* land and contains marshy areas and abundance of water. Only paddy is grown on them. The term *panchar* means land capable of being irrigated, rather than irrigated land. Such fields are found in the uplands and are frequently not well levelled, but water can be led to them in a canal and they can thus be sprinkled occasionally. The importance of this somewhat intermittent irrigation is not great. The lands are not suitable for the best kind of rice, and in ordinary seasons irrigation is not necessary as the rain if normal, does all that is required. In dry years, on the other hand, when artificial watering is necessary the canals are naturally lower than usual and in practice prove barely sufficient for the *seras*. At the same time, in such years every effort is made to give the fields a sprinkling sufficient to germinate the wheat, and if canals are not available for the purpose, the women carry up water from the nearest spring or stream in pitchers. The *panchar* land, therefore, hardly differs in value from the *upraon I*.

The *upraon I* lands are as good as *talaon* but they are not irrigated and totally depend for their cultivation on the rainfall. These lands are found in the valleys near the habitations and are suited for the cultivation of paddy, *jhangora*, wheat, barley and *mandua*. The



area under this group of land which was 3,32,279 *nalis* and 11 *mutthis* in 1900—1902, increased to 8,97,917 *nalis* and 6 *mutthis* (18,168.3 hectares), in 1964-65 the increase being 169 per cent during 62 years.

The *upraon* II (second class unirrigated terraced land) is slightly inferior to *upraon* I and lies above the villages near the top of the hills. It is suited for the cultivation of *jhangora* and *mandua*. The area under this group of land, which was 2,11,735 *nalis* and 7 *mutthis* in 1900—1902, increased to 7,38,228 *nalis* and 4 *mutthis* (14,937.3 hectares) at the Settlement of 1964-65, the increase being about 249 per cent during 62 years.

The *ijran* is the worst type of terraced land which is found on the steep slopes of high hills and depends for its cultivation on the rainfall. Cultivation is carried on here once in two to three years.

*Khil* or *katil* lands are also found on the steep slopes of high hills and their soil is full of stones and pebbles. Terracing and ploughing is impossible, and therefore, they are sparsely cultivated, the crops being poor. The area under *ijran* and *katil* lands which was 3,35,062 *nalis* and 14 *mutthis* in 1900—1902 had decreased to 82,606 *nalis* and 12 *mutthis* (1,671.3 hectares) in 1964-65, the decrease being about 75 per cent during the period of 62 years. The cause of reduction in *ijran* and *katil* lands is improvement effected in soil due to constant cultivation and better arrangements for irrigation.

**Soil Erosion**—Owing to the high gradient and a large number of rivers and streams, the problem of soil erosion in the districts is acute. Several schemes have been started to check the soil erosion such as raising along the banks of rivers, of trees like *tun*, *pangar*, *kaful* and *bel* which have economic value in the hills as well as help in checking soil erosion. Similarly, cultivators are being advised to plough against the slope and take to line sowing of crops.

### Harvest

Throughout the greater part of the district there are, as in the plains, two harvests—Kharif and Rabi. But owing to the cooler climate, the crops require a longer period for their full development and are, therefore, sown somewhat earlier and reaped somewhat later than in the plains. The Rabi crops include wheat, barley, *masur*, peas, linseed and mustard. Sugar-cane is grown in the valleys in the southern part of the district. The Rabi crops are sown from October to November and harvested from April to May but in fields at 2,150 m. the spring crop does not ripe until June and in those at

2,450 m. it ripens as late as July. In the snows *uajao* (Himalayan barley), a beardless variety, is grown at the height of 1,825 m. and upwards, being followed by the *phaphar* or *chuwa* in the Kharif. In the higher snow valleys close to the glaciers a fine species of wheat, known as *napal*, is grown as a Kharif crop. The seed is sown in May or early June when the snow melts and reaped in November, unless, as sometimes happens, heavy snow falls early in the autumn and prevents the crop from being reaped at all.

The Kharif crops include paddy, *mandua*, *madira*, *kauni*, *china*, maize, *ugal*, *urd*, *bhat*, *gahat*, *ras*, pulses and mustard and are sown between April and June and harvested between September and November. Most of the crops are already well above the ground before the onset of the monsoon. If the monsoon is delayed, second sowings are often necessary. Dry paddy for instance, is sown as early as the beginning of April and sometimes by the end of March. It depends for its existence upon the rather uncertain storms that sweep across the hills from the north-west during April and May. These storms often go astray or fail altogether, so that dry paddy is a most precarious crop and the cultivator is satisfied if he gets only about half of the harvest. *Kauni* (the *kakwan* or *kagni* of the plains), *china* and maize come to hand rather earlier than the main Kharif crops, each of the first two being normally a 60 day crop, and are frequently reaped by the middle of July. *Jhangora* is reaped by the middle of August and *mandua* and rice in late September and October. In the lower hills *tur*, a kind of pulse, resembling the *arhar* of the plains is sown in March and reaped with the main Kharif crops.

#### Method of Cultivation

In order to prepare the ground for seed, it is first of all ploughed once in the case of coarse Kharif crops, such as *jhangora* and *mandua*, and twice in the case of others. In the double-cropped area, the land is less carefully prepared for wheat or barley than for the Kharif crops. The Rabi seed is often sown among the half-ploughed-in stalks of the preceding crop. On the other hand, the fields are scrupulously cleared after the Rabi harvest before they are deemed fit for reception of the Kharif seed. In the case of rice, and sometimes wheat, the clods are broken up, after each ploughing with a long-handled mallet (*dalaya*) and the ground is smoothed over with a toothless harrow which is a flat wooden log (*maya*). The seed is then sown and ploughed in with the manure. When the Kharif crops have reached some height above the ground the toothed harrow, called *dandyala*, is applied. Then until they begin to come into ear, they are regularly weeded.

The crop is cut with a sickle, paddy being cut off close to the root, while in the case of *jhangora* or *mandua* the ears only are first cut, and after the stalks have dried they are cut and stored as fodder. Wheat and barley are cut about the middle. The sheaves are brought to the threshing floor. The ears are chopped off for threshing, while the stalk is given to the cattle. In normal years the remains on the field are grazed off by cattle or even burnt, but when grass is scarce they are carefully preserved for fodder.

In irrigated land rice is usually sown in a seedbed from which the young plants are transplanted into the remaining irrigated land. All the finer kinds of rice are produced by this method, which has the advantage of rendering land for which no water is available during the hot weather as valuable as perennially irrigated land. Pepper is similarly cultivated. Rice is not taken to the threshing floor but the paddy is separated from the stalks on the spot. It is usually left on the field for three days after being cut and then spread in sheaves on a matting of *ringal* or of wheat straw. The grain is then pressed out by the feet. In case of *mandua* and *jhangora* all that is done in the way of transplantation is to fill up the barer parts of the field by putting in seedlings taken from the more thickly sown parts so that the crop may be even all over.

Threshing-floors are usually constructed on a ridge, where a good current of air may be anticipated. They are commonly paved with stone flags. The grain is trodden out by oxen in the usual way and winnowed by pouring it out of a basket held high up on to a mat below. The grain is then stored in big baskets in the upper storeys of the houses till required for use. Rice is husked when required for use by pounding it in a sort of stone mortar hollowed out in the courtyard, with a stick about 6 cm. in diameter and 1.5 m. long, narrow in the middle where it is grasped, and bound at the end with iron rings and is known as *ginjala*. If required for sale, rice is husked immediately after harvesting.

### Principal Crops

The chief Kharif crops are paddy *jhangora*, *mandua*, pulses and potatoes; and the chief Rabi crops are wheat, barley and *masur*. Ginger and pepper are also grown in abundance in the district. Among vegetables, potato, onion, radish, *ghua*, *gaderi*, *lunki*, *turai*, *palak*, *methi*, brinjal, lady's-finger, *gethi*, cauliflower and *tarud* are grown in all parts of the district. Hemp grows wild in the waste lands and forests of the district. Local people obtain fibre from its plant for



making ropes and sack-cloth. Efforts were made as early as 1840 to popularise tea plantation in the Kumaon region and three places in the district, Berinag, Jhaltola and Chaukori, were selected for establishing tea gardens. Because of the popularity of tea grown in Assam and the Nilgiris, tea cultivation in these areas could not flourish and at present it is in a very declining state. The tea gardens had an area of 41,358 *nalis* (836 hectares) in Chaukori, 27,510 *nalis* (556.6 hectares) in Jhaltola and 9,667 *nali* (195.4 hectares) in Berinag in the district in 1964-65.

### Horticulture and Fruit Utilisation.

The district has an ideal climate for orchards. Besides the land brought under the plough, there are suitable tracts, rich in humidity and organic matters, between the heights of 1,800 m. and 3,000 m., which are suitable for horticulture, but they are under the jurisdiction of the forest department. Farmers own limited land and generally aim at growing food crops. Their reluctance is but natural as horticulture operations require much investment in the beginning and have a late return.

After the formation of the district, a number of schemes have been taken up by the horticulture department of the State for fruit and vegetable cultivation in the district.

**Long-term Loans and Grants-in-aid**—This scheme envisaged assistance to orchardists to enable them to effect improvements in existing orchards and for laying out new orchards. Under this scheme loans are given to orchardists for 15 years at Rs 1,500 per hectare, subject to a maximum of Rs 3,000 and the repayment of the loans starts after 5 years, 1/6th of it is converted into subsidy on proper utilisation of the loan. The following statement shows the amount of such loans and grants-in-aid sanctioned and disbursed in the district from 1960-61 to 1965-66 :

Year	Amount (in Rs)	
	Sanctioned	Disbursed
1960-61	1,00,000	61,700
1961-62	50,000	50,000
1962-63	80,000	77,400
1963-64	50,000	47,750
1964-65	50,000	40,000
1965-66	50,000	40,000

**Multipurpose Horticultural Farms**—In 1966, there were six multipurpose horticulture farms in the district at Pithoragarh, Balanti, Sirkha, Quenti, Thal and Badala and eight progeny orchards at Gangolihat, Munkot, Mansyari, Kanalichinna, Balwakot, Berinag, Bhataura and Didihat. They had been set up by the government to raise fruit seedlings and saplings to meet local demand and to serve as demonstration units for the protection of fruits, fruit plants and vegetables from pests by use of insecticides, etc. They have also been established with a view to augment the limited local supply of vegetables and demonstrate the best methods of grafting and pruning. The stress is on making known to the public the economic prospects of growing orchards systematically in order to meet the increasing demand for fruits and vegetables in the hills and plains. They have also saved the orchardists considerable expenditure in transporting saplings from outside and have improved the survival rate of saplings since the distance covered in transport has been greatly minimised. There are 8 model orchards, each of about two hectares established at the block headquarters in the district. Horticultural activities are demonstrated in these farms which also include technical guidance to growers. The yearwise physical achievements in these farms and model orchards from 1962-63 to 1965-66 have been as follows :

Year	Number of fruit plants produced and distributed	Vegetable seeds produced (in kg.)	Vegetable produced/sold (in kg.)	Potatoes produced (in kg.)	Fruits produced (in kg.)	Vegetable seeds distributed/sold (in kg.)
1962-63	1,40,278	260.00	..	730.00	1,500.00	433.00
1963-64	78,993	348.85	11,144.20	9,883.00	2,738.00	348.85
1964-65	70,403	493.04	16,077.49	20,170.50	2,341.15	189.85
1965-66	91,578	1,163.00	28,399.00	18,187.00	1,354.00	937.00

**Horticulture Plant Protection Mobile Teams**—There were eight such teams in the district in 1966. They were established in 1961-62, for disseminating knowledge of the use of insecticides and pesticides, and methods to take care of old and new orchards. These teams move throughout the district and assist the orchardists by distributing improved variety of fruit plants, suggest sites and ideal lay-outs for orchards, distribute vegetable seeds, educate people about the utility of vegetables and scientific methods of growing them, demonstrate proper budding and grafting, pruning

and culturing of fruit trees and treating trees, plants, crops, vegetables and seeds against pests and diseases. The principal achievements of these teams from 1962-63 to 1965-66 were as follows :

Year	Fruit plants supplied (no)	Vegetable seeds distributed (kg.)	Budding demonstration (nos)	Manurial demonstrations covering areas (in hectares)	Treatment of/fruit plants against pests and diseases (nos)	Vegetable/agricultural crops treated against pests and diseases (hectares)	Systematic lay-out of land (hectares)
1962-63	..	..	9,872	186.6	41,434	28.4	123.5
1963-64	75,738	952.57	23,977	84.9	12,132	161.8	221.4
1964-65	91,925	532.93	9,826	63.1	36,461	231.4	150.3
1965-66	65,041	937.00	12,928	167.2	165.9 (hectares)	153.6	196.2

Besides the above, the teams dug 18,398 pits around saplings and 184 pits for planting new saplings and established 184 kitchen gardens in 1964-65.

**Grants-in-aid for Transport Subsidy**—It is essential to ensure that the orchardists in the various parts of the district are able to get fruit plants at reasonable rates. Under this scheme therefore, the cost of transport from the farms and nurseries to the block headquarters is subsidised by the government and vegetable seeds are distributed free. A sum of Rs 10,000 was sanctioned as grant-in-aid towards transport subsidy in 1962-63, of which Rs 7,619 was utilised. In the next three years the grants sanctioned were Rs 10,200 Rs 10,000 and Rs 10,000 respectively.

**Purchase and Sale of Fruit Plants on no-Profit-no-Loss Basis**—This scheme, which was started in 1962-63, has greatly helped the distribution of fruit plants to actual beneficiaries. The yearwise grants from 1962-63 to 1965-66, sanctioned for the purchase and supply of fruit plants and vegetable seeds to prospective buyers, against cash payment, on a no-profit-no-loss basis were Rs 25,000, Rs 28,000, Rs 30,000 and Rs 30,000 respectively.

**Mali (Gardener) Training Scheme**—Starting in 1961-62, it envisages training, by a trained staff, in the art of pruning and grafting, plant protection measures and use of insecticides, for a period of three months at the multipurpose horticultural farms. A trainee is awarded a stipend of Rs 40 per month. The number of *malis* trained in the district in the year 1963-64 was 44 which increased to 64 in 1964-65.



**Community Fruit Canning Centres**—Hill fruits, such as apples, pears, plums and peaches, have a short season of production though are in considerable demand. A community fruit canning centre was opened at Pithoragarh in 1962, and it was proposed to establish two more such centres in the district in the near future. The main functions of the centre are to provide training to the people in the methods of scientific preservation and canning of fruits. The work done by the centre from 1962-63 to 1965-66 was as follows :

Year	Fruits canned (kg.)	Training in fruit preservation and canning given to persons (nos.)
1962-63	1,220.0	..
1963-64	815.0	63
1964-65	469.3	48
1965-66	1,591.0	198

**Rewards to Orchardists**—The local people are extremely poor and have frequently found it difficult to switch over to orchard plantation of their own volition, particularly because this results in a reduction in agricultural income for the period taken by the orchard to start bearing fruit. Incentives in the shape of a cash award, i. e. first and second prize of Rs 200 and Rs 100 at the district level and Rs 100 and Rs 50 at the block level from the year 1964-65 are being given to encourage the cultivators to grow more and better fruits.

### Improvement of Agriculture

**Agricultural Implements**—To impart knowledge about the use of improved implements, demonstrations are held in the villages and the fact that improved and modern implements are superior to the old and indigenous ones is increasingly being realised by the cultivators. Improved agricultural implements like ploughs, cultivating machines, seed drills, and threshers, numbering 247 were supplied in the district by the agriculture department in 1964-65 and 236 in 1965-66.

**Seeds**—Under the foundation seed scheme a number of cultivators in each village are provided with improved seeds by the agriculture department. They cultivate and multiply the seeds and distribute them to other cultivators. The following statement gives the details of foundation seed scheme for the year 1965-66 :

Item	Kharif	Rabi
Quantity of foundation seed distributed to Gram Beej Sahayaks (in quintals)	59.23	57.33
Quantity of seeds multiplied by Gram Beej Sahayaks (in quintals)	540.55	933.97
Quantity of seeds exchanged by Gram Beej Sahayaks (in quintals)	713.72	921.70

Vegetable seeds other than potatoes are also distributed to the cultivators. In 1965, the total distribution of vegetable seeds was 1,072 kg. in the district.

**Soil Nutrient**—The traditional manures for maintaining the fertility of the soil are cattle dung, farmyard refuse and stable litter. Unlike the plains, a large quantity of cow dung is utilised as manure by the cultivators as little of it is used as fuel.

**Compost Manure**—Conversion of farm refuse into compost is being popularised in the district. There were 1,209 pucca and 9,319 kutcha compost pits in 1964-65 and 1,351 pucca and 7,831 kutcha compost pits in the district in 1965-66 for preparing compost manure.

**Chemical Fertilizers**—The use of chemical fertilizers is being popularised and its consumption is steadily increasing. In 1964-65, nearly 121 tonnes of fertilizers of nitrogenous group and 80 tonnes of phosphatic group were distributed and in 1965-66 the quantity of such fertilizers distributed in the district was 218.42 tonnes of nitrogenous and 168.18 tonnes of phosphatic group of fertilizers. To popularise the use of manures and fertilizers, 415 general manurial and 248 fertilizer demonstrations were held in the district in 1964-65, and in the following year 262 general and 354 fertilizer demonstrations were carried out in the fields of cultivators.

**Rotation of Crops and Fallowing**—The top soil is generally not very thick and at places it is scanty in the fields. As such the practice of growing different crops in rotation on the same piece of land has been followed since time immemorial. The standard rotation found throughout the *upraon* land occupies a period of two years. Rice is sown in April and reaped in September. It is followed by wheat, sown in October and reaped in April. Then *mandua* is sown in May and harvested in October after which the land remains fallow till the next April. Barley is sometimes substituted for wheat and *jhangora* for rice. The *upraon* land of each village is divided into two parts, locally known as *sars*. The whole of the *upraon* is cultivated during the Kharif, one part being sown with *mandua* and the other with rice. The part in which *mandua* is sown is left fallow during the succeeding Rabi season. In the following year the *mandua sar* is sown with rice and the rice *sar* is sown with *mandua*. Beans and vetches such as *uril*, *mung*, *bhat* and *gahat* are sown in Kharif, as subsidiary to *mandua* and with the object of checking exhaustion of the soil. The system of leaving fallow a whole block of land instead of scattered fields here and there has its advantages when the cattle are turned loose

to graze on the remnants of the straw, and the grass that can be found on the terrace walls. For this reason nearly half the village is always found apparently lying waste in the winter.

The above rotation is, however, practically confined to *upraon* land or land in which irrigation is very poor. Irrigated land is generally found at the bottom of the valley, and is, as a rule, the warmest part of the village. Moreover, there is no risk even if the paddy is somewhat late. It is protected by irrigation against any damage which might be done to late paddy on dry land by an early cessation of rains. The rice harvest begins at the top of the hills and goes towards the bottom and the spring harvest proceeds in the opposite order. For these reasons in *talaon* (irrigated lands) it is always possible to grow two crops: one of rice and another of wheat, in the same year. The wheat crop in the cold weather besides being poorer than in the corresponding *upraon* land (as the soil in the *talaon* land is too damp and cold), has a prejudicial effect on the quality and yield of rice and is therefore often omitted altogether.

### Agricultural Diseases and Pests

There are three classes of pests that are generally common in the district, animals, birds and insects. Plant diseases—fungi and weeds—also cause a great deal of damage to cereals, vegetables and orchards. Similarly, monkeys, rats, squirrels, wild animals, bats, parrots and other birds damage the crops to a considerable extent. The usual means of protection that are employed against them are fencing, keeping a strict watch and adopting various means to destroy the pests. Leaf stripe, rust diseases, leaf roller, covered smut of barley and termites attack the wheat, cotton, barley and pea crops. The paddy crop is generally damaged by leaf spot and *gundhi* bug. Among the vegetables, potatoes are damaged by early and late blight, pink boll-worm and leaf spot. Citrus canker and wither tip damage citrus fruits. The methods for scientific control of pests have recently been introduced in the district. About 231.4 hectares of vegetable and agricultural crops and 36,461 fruit plants were saved from diseases and pests in 1965. Common weeds which are harmful to healthy crops are *bathua* (white goosefoot) and *chaulai* (a kind of spinach). Systematic weeding, destroying of affected plants in the season, interculturaling and sufficient ploughing of fields are the traditional methods, generally practised by the farmers of the district, in order to destroy these weeds. People are advised on matters relating to the cultivation of healthy crops of fruits, vegetables and cereals by the staff of



the plant protection department and of the development blocks which also provide spraying apparatus, dusting machines and chemical insecticides and pesticides at moderate rates.

#### ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

The hill cattle are usually small in size, active and sure-footed. The cows are wretched milkers, producing normally not more than a kilogram of milk a day. The sheep found in the lower hills differ from those of the plains in some minor characteristics, the chief being the shortness of the tail. The hillmen refuse to eat the flesh of the sheep found in the plains because they consider it a species of dog, owing to its long tail. The sheep in the northern *pattis* are strong and long legged and the goats there are also stout, shaggy animals of the local breed or that of the western Himalayas and are reared for their wool. Buffaloes are preferred to cows for milk purposes as the latter are of an inferior quality.

**Poultry**—Due to local prejudices and social customs, poultry breeding was not popular among the people. Slowly eggs and chickens are being accepted by the people as part of their diet. According to the live-stock census of 1966, there were 7,101 hens, 2,558 chickens, 3,977 cocks and 28 ducks in the district. There were eight poultry development blocks and three poultry extension centres in the district in 1966. The numbers of poultry birds and eggs for hatching distributed to private breeders during the Third Plan period were 5,112 and 20,972 respectively.

**Dairy Farming**—The demand for milk and milk products is generally met by private cattle owners who have their own dairies. During the summer, herds of buffaloes and cattle are housed in rough huts made of branches thinly roofed with grass, in places called *kharka*. They are located in pasture lands, far away from habitation, and a small staff attends each herd, collects the milk and turns it into ghee for sale.

**Fisheries**—Fish of various kinds abound in the rivers and perennial lakes of the district. Potentialities for the development of fisheries, specially of the indigenous trout and mirror carp, are being explored and the fisheries department is undertaking a survey in the district for this purpose. The fish are caught by means of nets, baskets, traps and weirs and if in smaller rivers, by diverting the stream.

#### Cattle Diseases and Veterinary Facilities

The cattle in the district is subject to black-quarter, rinderpest, fowl pox, Ranikhet disease, enterotoxaemia, sheep and goat pox,

anthrax, horse-sickness and rabies. Sometimes the animals owned by the exporters of northern region are the usual carriers of *khuria* (foot-and-mouth) disease. The prevalence of foot-rot disease is attributed largely to the practice of tethering cattle in the open fields, with the object of manuring the land. They often have to stand for hours in the wet mud for this purpose, which results in their suffering from *khuria*. *Manrog* (rinderpest) which generally proves fatal to cattle is not endemic in the district.

There were eight veterinary hospitals and 42 stockman centres in the district in 1966. The number of animals treated in the district during the Third Five-year Plan period was 2,35,975, the number of animals castrated during the same period being 17,389.

### Housing and Feeding

Generally the cattle are housed in the *goth* (a small room on the ground floor of the dwelling house) or in separate cowsheds. Well-ventilated and well-lit cattle sheds are to be seen mostly in government shelters. Oak leaves are spread on the floor of the sheds at least once a year. Fodder consists chiefly of grass carried in from the more precipitous hillsides by the women. The cattle graze the stubble of harvested fields, or in forests, village pastures, or hillside pastures. Grazing facilities are available in the reserved and other forests under stipulated terms and conditions. In the summer, the cattle are driven up to rich forests on higher hills where there are more or less permanent cattle stations. The cattle stay there until the rains set in and grass grows near the habitation site. In the extreme north the grassy expanses between the upper limit of the forest and the region of perpetual snow are the summer grazing grounds for cattle belonging to the villages in the vicinity. The government provided a sum of Rs 1,36,555 to the *gaon sabhas* of the district in the Third Plan period for improving the pasture lands, and nearly 1,123 acres of land was thus converted into good pastures.

### FORESTRY

Forests covered nearly 96,018 hectares in 1966 occupying about 13.3 per cent of the total area of the district. The main forest products are timber and resin from which rosin and turpentine oil are made. They also provide grazing facilities to thousands of sheep and local cattle. During the year 1965-66, the forest products consisted of 1,947.8 cubic meters of timber, 14,800 quintals of firewood and 7,883 quintals of resin. Among the minor products are charcoal and various types of medicinal plants and herbs. Firewood, charcoal and grass are

consumed locally but the timber and resin are sold on commercial basis. The local inhabitants take medicinal plants and herbs, fallen firewood and fodder grass for their bonafide use without any cost.

For scientific development and exploitation of the forests, working plans are prepared for a period of 10 to 15 years by the forest department. The felling of trees and exploitation of other forest products are regulated in accordance with the programme laid down in the working plan. The forest growth is re-assessed and the prescriptions suitably modified or altered so as to fall in with the required working plan. The working conditions in the forests have considerably improved partly because of the opening of the roads and partly due to the construction of many buildings in the remote forest areas of the district.

These forests have great importance in the economy of the district. They conserve soil, regulate the climate, improve fertility of agricultural land, provide pastures for cattle, meet the daily requirements of the local people for fuel, fodder, agricultural implements and structural timber and give employment to many of them. Under the afforestation scheme, the degraded forests have been rehabilitated and trees of economic importance have been planted. It has been propagated that the plantation of deodar, *chir* and *kail* was necessary for checking soil erosion.

#### NATURAL CALAMITIES

The heavy rainfall of the hills insures the people to a great extent against periodical crop failures which so devastate the plains. On rare occasions, when both the monsoon and storms of local origin fail the stable financial position of the people generally carries them over the failure of a single crop. The famines of 1868 and 1878 which occurred in the region, of which the district was a part, were very severe but their records are not available. In 1889, the monsoon, though copious, was untimely, and staple food crops such as *mandua*, *mandira*, *kangni* and *bhat* were very short in supply paddy being also deficient. The scanty autumn harvest was followed by a complete failure of the usual cold weather crops except in the *pattis* immediately below the snow ranges. In 1920, there was scarcity in the district owing to deficient rains in the preceding year which raised the prices of food-grains. Relief measures had to be taken and consisted of distribution of *tagari* for subsistence, and for purchase of pack animals. Several cheap grain shops were opened by persons with the aid of money advanced without interest. Distress was experienced



almost in every part of Pithoragarh tahsil and a part of Didihat tahsil. *Tagavi* was distributed in Saun, Nayades Seti Malla, Waldia Malla, Waldia Bichla, Kharayat, Mehar, Rawal, Seti Talla, Waldia Talla, Bel, Bherang and Athigaon Palla *pattis* of Pithoragarh tahsil and *patti* Mali of Didihat tahsil. Part of the big river valleys of the Sarju and Gori were not hit much. On the pilgrim routes prices of food-grains went up to one seer to the rupee. A feature of this period was that one noticed very little begging or desertion of children and of old and weak persons. There was no marked fall in wages. This increase in stamina and endurance was largely due to the existence of considerable savings which were made by people during the war of 1914—1918, and to money received by way of military pay, pension, etc. Forest operations and the resulting employment materially helped the pockets of people. Though extensive droughts or famines have not been reported, the district, at times, suffered from the onslaught of heavy rains, extensive landslides and avalanches. Hail-storms, too, have occasionally occurred and caused considerable loss to standing crops of vegetables and orchards. The yearwise statement from 1961-62 to 1965-66 of the area affected by natural calamities and the relief measures adopted by the government is given below :

Year	Calamities	Area affected (in hectares)	Relief provided (in rupees)
1961-62	.. Heavy rains and landslides	102.3	3,335
1962-63	.. Hail-storm ..	1,962.7	1,143
October, 1963	.. Heavy rains	777.1	300
September, 1964	.. landslides		
October, 1964	.. Heavy rains ..	..	..
September, 1965	.. Drought ..	905 villages	..
October, 1965	.. Hail-storm ..	1,416.4 (121 villages)	1,175

## CHAPTER V

### INDUSTRIES

#### Old-time Industries

Wool spinning and weaving are old cottage industries which are said to have existed in the region covered by the Pithoragarh district for centuries. Indo-Tibetan wool trade had helped in the growth of this industry. The inhabitants of the northern *pattis* were mainly engaged in this craft. Most of them spun and wove the wool of their indigenous sheep. The staple was short and the texture of the wool coarse, and rough blankets were woven. Only a few of these were sold, most of them being used by the weaver and his family. However, the Tibetan sheep provided them with fine wool of long staple, which they wove into rough serge (for making garments) or made it into wraps.

The inhabitants of tahsils Dharchula and Mansyari are the great weavers of the district, and the spinning is all done by hand. These northern shepherds can be seen moving along the road, tending their flocks and constantly revolving their spindles. As soon as one finishes his march for the day he sets up his loom and spends the rest of the day weaving. It is gathered that as many as 12,000 persons were engaged in the trade in 1925. The industry comprised 4,000 units and produced beautiful pieces of carpets and blankets worth Rs 4,00,000 per year, till about the middle of this century. The weavers had their own designs which they deftly combined with Tibetan designs. They imported Tibetan wool worth about Rs 10,00,000 (3,732 quintals in weight) per year and consumed some of it and passed on the rest to factories in the plains, notably at Kanpur. However, after 1950, the competition from factory goods (blankets and shawls manufactured at Kanpur and carpets manufactured in Bhadohi) increased and the Chinese occupation of Tibet added to the difficulties of the people. The import of wool from Tibet has ceased since 1962.

Production of tea and *ringal* (*Arundinaria*) goods are the other old and notable industries of the district. Tea industry was introduced in the district probably in the early part of the sixteenth century and the British encouraged the setting up of tea-estates

here about the beginning of the nineteenth century. Two of these estates were established at Jhaltola and Berinag in 1861 and 1864 respectively. About 12,471.2 kg., of tea was produced in 1925 and it almost entirely replaced foreign tea in the markets. But the monopoly of tea production did not last long and the competition offered by the tea produced in Assam undid the earlier gains and the industry is finding it difficult to flourish.

Another old time handicraft of the district, baskets and matting manufactured out of *ringal* found its way to Tibet and a large number of baskets and mattings were sold in the fairs at Jarajibli and Thal. The industry was concentrated at Malla Danpur but the people were mostly occupied in this work in the winters. Excellent mattings for floors and baskets of different types were made.

Narrow strips of cloth of hemp fibre have also been manufactured here since ancient times. The stalks of the male plant were cut green and dried for several days in the sun before they became brown. Thereafter they were tied into bundles and steeped for 15 or 16 days in pools or running streams, being kept under water by stones laid upon them. They were then taken out, beaten with wooden mallets and dried in the sun, whereafter the fibre was peeled off from the thick end of the stalk to the top. It was then cleaned and tied up into hanks. This fibre was spun into yarn and then made into bags or woven into cloth. This cloth was extremely durable. The fibre is now confined to the manufacture of bags which are in great demand. Paper was also manufactured in village Satgarh of Kanalichinna Block, using the *sat barua* plant. The industry disappeared in the first three decades of this century as it could not compete with the fine factory-made paper. Wooden utensils and jugs were also manufactured in large numbers in the valley of the river Gori.

This industry has now given place to carpentry units. A few people living by the banks of the Sarju and Kali rivers in Kali Kumaon used to make catechu out of the *khair* tree. They paid a licence fee of Rs 30 per still, and the average income from a still, came to about Rs 70, thus giving a fair return.

With the formation of the district, efforts have been afoot to help its gradual industrialisation. Local people are being trained in various crafts in the production-cum-training centres and financial and technical aid is also being given to them.



### Small-scale Industries

**Tea**—There are only 3 tea estates at Berinag, Chaukori and Jhaltola, spread over 66,81,159.9 hectares. About Rs 1,00,000 is invested in the industry and 50 persons are employed in the picking season. Tea worth Rs 2,00,000 was produced in 1966 and the bulk of it was exported.

**Saw-mills**—Furniture and sawn timber are produced in 8 units, 4 being located at Pithoragarh town, 2 at Bin (tahsil Pithoragarh), and one each at Dharchula and Gangolihat (tahsil Didihat). An amount of about Rs 70,000 is invested in the industry which employs 17 persons. Production rose to Rs 1,60,000 worth of furniture and sawn timber in 1966. This has given impetus to the house building industry since availability of cheap planks and sleepers have helped in the erection of houses on the hills in large numbers. A production-cum-training centre was established at Bin in 1962 in which up to the year 1966 a sum of Rs 60,500 was spent and goods (furniture, etc.) worth Rs 25,150 manufactured. Training in carpentry was imparted to 4 persons and stipends totalling Rs 750 were paid in 1966-67.

### Village and Cottage Industries

Besides wool weaving, leather goods, furniture, metal goods, baskets and mats, production of oil (from oil-seeds), job-work (printing) and radio repairing are the other cottage and village industries. These units are widespread and are generally situated near the dwellings of the workers and are manned by the members of the owner's family. There were 5,204 units, employing about 12,090 persons in 1966 with an investment of Rs 9,01,625 and they produced goods, worth Rs 21,99,814.

**Wool and Woollen Goods**—Woollen goods like *thulmas*, *chuktas* (types of blankets), *namdas* (carpets) and tweed are produced in about 5,000 units, engaging about 10,000 persons, at Berinag, Dharchula, Didihat, Mansyari, Pithoragarh, Sirkha and Thal. It has been estimated that a sum of about Rs 5,00,000 was invested in the industry, and wool and woollen goods worth Rs 12,98,154 were manufactured in 1966. The supply of wool has decreased since 1962, when trade with Tibet came to an end. Efforts are being made to rear sheep of good strain, most of which have been imported from Australia. Besides the distribution of improved weaving frames, training in weaving and dyeing are also imparted in the production-cum-training centres opened by the industries department since 1962 to stabilise

and encourage the industry. Besides producing wool and woollen goods (including yarn) these centres are also utilised for imparting training in wool-carding, spinning, weaving, dyeing, and knitting-cum-embroidery.

The introduction of *jal charkhas* and establishment of a carding plant in 1960-61 are the new features of this industry. The carding plant is located at Dharchula and provides carded wool for the 6 *jal charkhas* at Balwakot, Galati, Kalika, Mansyari, Thal (established in 1960-61) and at Sirkha (established in 1964-65). A *jal charkha* has about 24 spindles and is driven either by a stream or a number of streams which come down with velocity and force. Woollen yarn of even thickness is produced from the carded yarn. Each *jal charkha* is manned by 8 to 12 persons. The total investment in this scheme of *jal charkhas* and the carding plant amounted to Rs 44,356 and they have produced woollen yarn worth about Rs 1,50,000 in 1966-67. Ten persons were also trained in the use of *jal charkhas* in the same year.

Wool spinning classes have been started at Didihat, Dharamghar, Gurna and Munkot since 1960-61 and classes in weaving were also opened at Bin. The investment over these centres came to Rs 3,01,100 while goods worth Rs 1,42,500 have been manufactured in 1966. These centres employ 65 men and have imparted training in the new type of spinning and weaving to 10 and 36 persons respectively in 1966-67. Every trainee received Rs 25 per month as stipend. Yet another centre known as the knitting-cum-embroidery centre was opened at Pithoragarh in 1960-61. Besides handling job-work worth Rs 10,000, it trained 56 persons in this craft in 1966. A wool utilisation centre at Dharchula, a shawl-weaving and carpet-making centre at Didihat (both in 1960-61) and a *namda*-making centre at Dharchula in 1963-64 have also been established. In the wool utilisations scheme, waste wool is utilised. Goods worth Rs 34,470 were produced in 1966 under this scheme though only 4 persons could be trained at the centre. The shawl and carpet-weaving centre was more popular and imparted training to 80 persons, producing goods worth Rs 10,000. In 1966, goods worth Rs 2,140 only could be produced in *namda*-making centres and training could be imparted to only 34 persons. Training in finishing and dyeing was given by the trained staff, attached to a mobile unit at Berinag, Gangolihat, Dharchula, Didihat, Kanaliehinna and Mansyari, who visit the residences of the trainees. This scheme was started in 1961-62 and up to March 31, 1966, a sum of Rs 1,29,777.18 was spent on it.

**Leather Industry**—This industry has grown since 1961 and is mainly located at Berinag, Didihat, Dharchula, Kanalichinna, Mansyari, Munkot, Pithoragarh and Sirkha. About Rs 97,000 is invested in the industry which comprises 204 units manned by 290 persons. Tanned leather and footwear worth Rs 2,38,500 were produced in 1966.

The government has provided technical knowledge to the indigenous cottage tanners. Besides, funds have also been made available for the purchase of machines and construction of tanneries. The use of guava leaves in combination with myrobelan has been found economic and satisfactory for the tanning of raw hides.

**Logging and Preparation of Timber**—Pine-trees grow between altitudes of 900 m. and 1,000 m. and deodars even higher. The felling season extends from November to April. It takes great skill to fell tall trees. The branches and the barks of the felled trees are removed and they are sawn by hand into over 2 m. lengths, known as sleepers. The sleepers are first brought to Jarajibli and Ghoribagar and then the rivers carry them to the districts of Almora and Naini Tal.

There were 20 units situated at Jarajibli and Ghoribagar which produced timber and 133 persons were employed in the trade in 1961, and which had a total investment of Rs 2,000. Sleepers worth Rs 10,000 floated down in the rivers in that year.

**Resin**—Resin is extracted from pine-trees and provides employment for 8 months in a year. Resin worth Rs 3,38,415 (3,947 quintals in weight) was produced in 1965-66.

**Carpentry and Blacksmithy**—This industry has been rapidly developing since 1960, as technical and financial aid has been made available for it by the government. In 1966, there were 353 units scattered all over the district with a total investment of Rs 2,48,175 and employed 1,176 artisans. Furniture, iron goods, etc., worth Rs 5,42,260 were produced in this period.

A centre which imparts training in manufacturing and repairing agricultural implements and metal goods, was established at Bin (in Pithoragarh tahsil) in 1964-65 with a total investment of Rs 26,930. Training was imparted to 5 persons and agricultural implements, etc., worth Rs 10,135, were produced in 1966.

**Basket and Allied Industry**—Baskets of different types, mats, etc., are made from *ringal* (*Arundinaria*), which is generally about



3 m. in height and has a diameter of 8 cm. It is more flexible than bamboo, but less than cane. It grows above the height of 1,800 m. and must be cut when it is leafless and prepared for use in winter.

There are 35 units which comprise the industry. They are located at Berinag, Ganaigangoli and Gartir. A sum of about Rs 2,200 is invested in the industry, and baskets, mats, etc., worth Rs 35,000, were produced, employing 2,100 persons, in 1966.

The skill is hereditary and the artisans produce beautiful baskets known as *kandis* by combining different colours. Durable and beautiful matting for floor and the *kandis* (at times covered by leather or untanned skin) are bought by tourists and others in large numbers.

A *ringal* and wood working centre was established at Jarajibli in 1963-64. A sum of about Rs 8,956 was invested and 17 artisans were trained in the craft of making *ringal* and wooden articles in 1966. In the same period goods worth Rs 565 were produced at the centre.

**Hemp Industry**—This industry is mainly located at Dharchula, Jarajibli, Mansyari and Sirkha. Both types of hemp—cultivated as well as wild—are used for this work. Hemp plant is valuable both for its fibre and the seeds. The former is used for the manufacture of ropes and *bhangela* (sack-cloth) and the latter are used as condiment, or eaten fried with wheat. The best fibre is produced from the male plant which is spun on wheels into yarn and then woven.

In 1966, there were 160 units with a total investment of Rs 12,000, and fibre and cloth worth Rs 18,000 were produced.

**Tailoring-cum-Hosiery Centres**—With the onset of urbanisation, the demand for tailored and hosiery goods has increased. The industries department has opened tailoring-cum-hosiery centres, one each at Balwakot, Khela, Mansyari and Tejam. Training in tailoring and hosiery is imparted in these centres and 124 persons were trained in 1966. About Rs 31,120 was invested in the scheme and garments worth Rs 9,358 were produced in 1966.

**Gur and Khandsari**—Amongst the village industries, *gur* (jaggery), *khandsari* and oil extraction through improved *kolhus* and *ghanis* are the more important ones. *Khandsari* and *gur* is produced in 13 units which are located at Bana, Baram and Mawani. In 1966 about Rs 10,000 was invested in the industry and jaggery and *khandsari* worth Rs 16,000 were produced. It employed 80 persons.

There are 9 units located at Jakh Puran and Thal, which extract oil from oil-seeds (mustard, hemp-seed, etc.). About Rs 2,150 was invested in the industry and oil worth Rs 2,400 was produced, employing 9 persons in 1966.

**Other Industries**—Copper utensils are manufactured in 6 units (manned by 20 persons), which are located at Berinag and Pithoragarh. About Rs 5,800 was invested in the industry and copper utensils worth Rs 13,500 were manufactured in 1966. The two printing presses at Pithoragarh, performed job-work worth Rs 16,000, and five persons were employed in them in 1966. Two units (at Pithoragarh) repair radio-sets. Job-work worth Rs 10,000 was performed and 32 persons found employment in the year 1966.

**Sericulture**—This region offers suitable climatic conditions for silk-worm rearing, particularly the univoltine races. The government have opened two nurseries at Siloli and Jajurali in 1965-66. These nurseries supply second stage larvae to the rearers for rearing and production of cocoons, as well as distribute mulberry seedlings and grafts to them for plantation on their lands. In addition, the cocoons produced by the rearers are purchased by the planning department at subsidized rates. An expenditure of Rs 31,080 was incurred in 1965-66 on this scheme.

#### INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

The district has a large area under snow and forests, but it is not totally devoid of raw material and has a considerable industrial potential. It can yield rosin and turpentine, pine-tar, soapstone and talc, honey, timber packing cases and pine-wood.

Resin is the raw materials used for the manufacture of rosin and turpentine. It is collected mostly from pine-trees. The tapping work is being developed and there is ample room for increasing the output of resin. The processing of resin into turpentine and rosin does not require a complicated plant and machinery and small units can be installed with a modest outlay. Once the units are installed the local people can operate them without difficulty. The steady demand of rosin and turpentine from indigenous and foreign consumers can add to the economic stability of the industry.

Pine-tar is obtained from the highly resinous stump wood (commonly called *dhilka* or torchwood) of rejected or fallen pine-trees and allied species that are abundantly found in this region. At present a few units produce impure pine-tar, because of lack of laboratory facilities and technical knowledge. Pine-tar is used in the manufacture of belts, ropes, rubber goods, and water-proofing compounds.

The rubber industry alone needs large quantities of pine-tar which can be produced in scientifically organised units in the district.

The soapstone found in this district is of first-rate quality for commercial and cosmetic industries. Several deposits occur at Dewal Thal associated with magnetite. Of late, soapstone and talc are in great demand and textile mills also use them in calendering processes. With the import restrictions on foreign goods, the indigenous talcum powder is largely used. The industry can be organised near Kanalichinna. Soapstone lumps can be reduced to fine powder by a battery of water-mills. Simple grading apparatus can yield powder of first-rate quality.

The climate and the floral distribution of the district are suitable for the development of apiary.

Pine-needles, which are at the moment a waste material and a problem for the forest department for prevention of forest fires, offer raw material for the production of fibres known as pine-wool. It is used as a packing material as well as fillers. Pine-wool can be manufactured by a pilot plant assisted by saw-mills.

In future, as more power (electricity) and better means of communications are made available, many other industries can be profitable established in the district.



## CHAPTER VI

# BANKING TRADE AND COMMERCE

### BANKING AND FINANCE

**History of Indigenous Banking**—Pithoragarh has been connected with Tibet and Nepal. This resulted in the people, exchanging with these countries food-grains, sugar, cloth and silver for salt, borax, sheep, ponies, wool, tea, butter and gold. This trade had continued from early times, though its scope was limited by the difficulties of weather and communications. At times the residents of the Northern regions had a good supply of food-grains, gold and silver which they hoarded. *Sahukars* (village traders) advanced food-grains, gold and silver at an interest of about 25 per cent per annum (in the 19th century) against personal security and against ornaments, goods and immovable property. There was another class of financiers known as *Kharagwals* who financed the bulk of the Indo-Tibetan trade in the past. They did not ask for security and charged interest at 25 to 50 per cent per annum. Because of the hazards of terrain and the inclement weather, the trade remained mostly in the hands of local inhabitants. In the nineteenth century money flowed to them from bankers at Calcutta, Kanpur and other places, who procured wool and borax from Tibet through them. The Kanpur Woollen Mills kept an agent at Tanakpur, the last railhead, who entered into contracts with them and gave them advances for the purchase of wool.

But the Indo-Tibetan trade came to a standstill in 1962, as the Chinese government imposed restrictions on it.

Banks opened their branches after 1946 in the district. The Naini Tal Bank Ltd., established a branch at Pithoragarh in June, 1947. The State Bank of India established its branch there in December, 1959, and the Pithoragarh District Co-operative Bank, Ltd., was opened in April, 1962.

### Rural Indebtedness

Uneconomic holdings and lack of means of improved agriculture have been the cause of the chronic poverty of the residents of this area. Cultivators were forced to accept loans from *mahajans* (money-lenders). After 1820, trade with the plains and Tibet increased considerably and the residents of the Northern regions, benefited from

it. Some of them accumulated large sum, and deposited them with merchants at 6 per cent interest. The rate of interest charged by merchants and money-lenders ranged from 25 to 50 per cent per annum. However, under the British, conditions improved somewhat, and Sir H. Ramsay (then Commissioner of Kumaon) observed in 1874 that there was every reason to look forward to still greater prosperity among the people of the region. The greatest advantage which the hillman had over the plainsman was the small revenue he paid. Moreover, the rainfall in hills was regular and famines rare. The incidence of land revenue was only Rs 3 per family in 1910, a sum which could easily be earned. It used to be said that the Kharif sufficed for food and the Rabi for profit. It was sold to pay the revenue and buy cloth or other necessities or luxuries. The economic condition in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries improved slightly but indebtedness was more or less looked upon as a natural state of affairs. The economic depression of the thirties of this century, however, worsened the monetary condition of the agriculturists and a large number of them had to borrow in order to meet the expenses on marriage, litigation and other unproductive items. They also invested about 33 per cent of the loans in productive channels, in 1930.

The high prices of agricultural products prevailing during the period of the war of 1939—45 gave the agriculturists good returns in terms of money, but they had to pay high prices both for non-agricultural and agricultural necessities such as clothes, live-stock and implements. The prices of food-grains have continued to rise, assuring consistent returns to the agriculturists, although increase in population and the standard of living have kept up the traditional financial difficulties. About 85 per cent of the rural families are indebted and the average debt per family is about Rs 150. About 90 per cent of the borrowing families pay back their debt every year.

### **Debt-relief Legislation**

In the district, as elsewhere in the State, attempts have been made since the first quarter of this century, to find out a remedy for rural indebtedness, and legislative measures were adopted to regulate the terms and conditions of money-lending, although the policy of laissez-faire continued to prevail for years.

The Usurious Loans Act, 1918, authorised the courts to reopen issues in which the interest was 'excessive' and the transaction 'unfair' between the parties, and to relieve the debtor of all liability in respect

of any excessive interest. By an amendment in 1926, the Act was made applicable to any party seeking relief from mortgage. But the Act did not give a precise definition of the terms 'fair' and 'excessive' and the law courts could not always determine whether a transaction was 'unfair' and the rate of interest charged 'excessive'.

In the period of economic depression and onwards, till 1939, legislation was framed with the object of scaling down and adjusting debts. The United Provinces Agriculturists' Relief Act, 1934, brought some measure of relief as it provided *inter alia* for payment of loans in instalments at a low rate of interest on secured and unsecured debts. The Temporary Postponement of Execution of Decrees Act, 1937, provided that the proprietors, whose land revenue did not exceed Rs 1,000 a year, would be unconditionally stayed. The United Provinces Debt Redemption Act, 1940, provided for the accounting of interest at low rates and protecting the property of debtors from any large scale liquidation. But the benefits of these legislative measures hardly accrued to the rural masses, and they could be availed of only by the educated or the more substantial borrowers.

### Role of Private Money-lenders and Financiers

*Sahukars* and businessmen advance loans at an exorbitant rate of interest which is sometimes as high as 72 per cent per annum. However, for larger sums (Rs 100 and above) the rate of interest varies from 9 per cent to 18 per cent per annum. In addition, the borrower receives only Rs 93.75 for every Rs 100 borrowed, the deduction being made by way of *ganth khulai* (opening the knot) charges which are considered legitimate and account for the clerical services provided by the money-lender.

The *sahukar* commands the respect of the local people and generally finances marriages, litigation, agricultural operations and other requirements of the agriculturists.

**Government Loans**—The government advances loans for specific purposes, such as improvement of land and purchase of seed and fertilisers, under the various Acts in force from time to time.

The amounts of government loans distributed in the district in 1966-67 at 5½ per cent per annum interest are given below :

Act	Purpose	Amount of loan (in Rs)	Period of loan
Act XII of 1883	Improvement of agriculture and land	80,500	2 years
Act XIX of 1884	Improvement of agriculture and land	5,000	10 years



### Co-operative Movement

Prior to 1960, the district had only some credit co-operative societies, but since that year the movement for the setting of multipurpose co-operative societies has gathered momentum. Some of the smaller co-operatives were merged into larger ones and termed as multipurpose societies. There were 470 co-operative societies with a total membership of 22,264 in 1960, and Rs 1,76,816 was advanced at a low rate of interest (8.75 per cent per annum) to the members. In 1966, there were 285 co-operative societies with a total membership of 30,573, and Rs 7,94,270 was advanced by them at an interest of 9 per cent per annum to the members. Of these as many as 242 societies are agricultural and cater to the requirements of agriculturists only, 89 of these functioning as multipurpose societies. They provide, seed, agricultural implements and other goods required by the farmers.

During the Second World War (1939—45), prices began to rise and the first consumers' co-operative society was established at Pithoragarh in 1944. The number of these societies rose to 6 in 1966, of which two are at Pithoragarh and one each at Berinag, Chandag, Dharchula and Maharkhola. They had a membership of 1,475, with a share capital of Rs 44,118 and working capital of Rs 1,49,363. Goods worth Rs 9,05,897 were sold by them to the members in 1966. In order to give further impetus to this movement, the district co-operative federation was established at Pithoragarh in 1961, which is affiliated to the Uttar Pradesh Co-operative Federation, Lucknow. Its membership comprised 202 societies and individuals, and it has a share capital of Rs 6,820 and a working capital of Rs 20,164 in 1966 when goods worth Rs 3,02,546 were sold. There are 18 development societies, located in various *pattis* of the district, with a total membership of 3,665 persons. These societies had a share capital of Rs 87,785, and a working capital of Rs 1,76,371, and sold goods (agricultural implements, seeds, etc.) worth Rs 9,24,641 in 1966.

The co-operative movement has spread to other trades and there are 5 wage earners' societies, a transport society and a labour society which endeavour to help their respective groups.

**Co-operative Bank**—The Pithoragarh District Co-operative Bank, Ltd, was established at Pithoragarh in April, 1962. In addition to banking operations the bank provides credit facilities to co-operative institutions, the rate of interest on loans varying from 6½ per

cent per annum to 9 per cent per annum, and on deposits from 4 to 7 per cent per annum. The following statement gives the volume of business procured by the bank in 1964-65 and 1965-66 :

Year	Member- ship	Share capital (in rupees)	Deposits (in rupees)	Loans advanced (in rupees)	Profit (in rupees)
1964-65 ..	320	2,85,424.47	1,42,173.85	7,90,950.40	8,750.98
1965-66 ..	262	3,09,969.17	1,70,843.75	5,60,000.00	7,250.00

### Other Banks

The Naini Tal Bank, Ltd, has a branch located at Pithoragarh. This branch finances various trades and industries and procured business worth about Rs 1,26,10,500 in 1967. It charges interest at 8 per cent to 12 per cent per annum on advances and grants 4 per cent to 9 per cent per annum on deposits. Owned and working capital of the bank in December, 1967 was Rs 6,34,000.

The State Bank of India charges  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent to 10 per cent of interest per annum on advances and allows 4 per cent to 7 per cent of interest per annum on deposits. The bank also finances various trades in the district.

### National Savings Organisation

The post-office savings bank scheme was introduced in the district in 1882. It was the first scheme of its kind and now other schemes are also operating. These schemes are designed to tap the savings of those people who generally do not subscribe to governmental loans. They also inculcate the habit of thrift, thus making funds available to the government for investment in Five-year Plans.

The net investments under various securities in the Pithoragarh district were Rs 8,51,877 and Rs 6,93,648 in 1963-64 and 1964-65 respectively.

### Life Insurance

The Life Insurance Corporation of India began to procure business in the district from 1960-61. The following statement gives the business procured in Pithoragarh district since 1960-61 :

Period	Business (in rupees)	Number of lives assured
1960-61 ..	12,96,500	222
1961-62 ..	17,13,500	233
1962-63 ..	14,58,000	363
1963-64 ..	21,06,600	435
1964-65 ..	17,21,250	299
1965-66 ..	23,29,500	542

## Currency and Coinage

In days before the British occupation of the region, *timasha* (equivalent to one-fifth of a rupee) was a popular coin. The other prevalent coin was the Gurkha rupee (worth three-fourths of the Indian rupee) which was given greater importance and was the main unit of payment for a long time. The price of a bride was usually reckoned in Gurkha rupees. After the first Settlement of revenue (in 1815) by Gardner, land revenue had to be paid not in Gurkha rupees but in Farrukhabadi rupees, which the East India Company accepted as good currency.

By the second decade of the present century, the old coins had become obsolete and were replaced by the government currency of British India.

The decimal system of coinage was introduced in the district on October 1, 1958.

## TRADE AND COMMERCE

### Course of Trade

Indian traders exported to Tibet grains (wheat, rice, barley), *gur* (jaggery), cloth (cotton and broad), hardware, tobacco and spices. Their principal imports from that country were borax, salt, gold dust, wool, yak's tails, ponies, sheep and goats. Exports were valued at Rs 94,924 and imports at Rs 3,09,507 in 1877-78 and they increased to Rs 1,94,303 and Rs 3,43,932 respectively in 1882-83. The trade in borax began to decline in the first decade of the nineteenth century due to the competition offered by borax imported from Italy and the same was true of salt, as cheaper and cleaner salt found its way to this area, from the plains. However, advancement in the wool trade compensated the loss and, in 1907, the total imports of wool reached the figure of 445.04 quintals (11,925 maunds).

The traders of the northern region entered Tibet at the beginning of June, carrying their goods on pack-animals. The richer among them had money but the poorer ones were compelled to do business by barter only. Certain marts were apportioned to the various passes, and within these marts the trader operated with their established correspondents. In the season, which lasted up to October, they made two or three journeys from their base depots. In the winter they shifted their families to the lower heights in the south and their trade also shifted accordingly. In this period they sold Tibetan articles and procured enough grains, cloth, etc., to trade in Tibet in the next season. The trade with Tibet came to an end in 1962.



There was considerable trade with Nepal in the nineteenth and first-half of the twentieth centuries. The Nepalis exchanged ghee, honey and fruits for salt, Tibetan wool, wheat, rice and cloth at Jara-jibli, which lies on the Nepal border.

The traders of the northern region also traded with their counterparts from the plains at Tanakpur, Bageshwar, Almora and Haldwani. They procured food-grains, salt, cotton cloth, garments and sugar and sold wool, *ringal* baskets and mats, herbs, honey and turmeric to the businessmen from the plains.

The agriculturists in the district used to exchange grains for wool and salt, with the residents of the northern regions till the fifties of this century, but now they demand cash. The contractors, besides selling herbs, used to export logs through the rivers to the plains. This trade has developed considerably and the number of persons engaged in this trade stood at 1,243 in 1961.

### Exports and Imports

**Exports**—Potatoes, ghee, honey, vegetables and fruits comprise the export trade of the district. Export of wool and woollen goods has been considerably reduced since 1962 but this trade is likely to rise, with the development of wool and allied industries. Baskets and tea are also exported, the latter finding its way to the United States and Europe. The other exports chiefly go to the plains in the south of the district. The following will give a rough idea of the exports made during the year 1965:

Commodities	Exports (value in rupees)
Woollen goods (carpets and blankets), tea, baskets and mats	4,50,000
Ghee .. .. .	3,00,000
Honey .. .. .	3,00,000
Potatoes .. .. .	1,20,000
Vegetables and fruits .. .. .	4,500
Ground-nut .. .. .	500

**Imports**—Food-grains, pulses, oil, agricultural implements and raw materials (chemicals, cotton yarn, etc.), are the main items of

import, which are generally imported from the plains. The following table gives approximate figures for imports in 1965 :

Commodities	Imports (value in rupees)
Food-grains (wheat, pulses, rice)	1,06,48,900
Cloth	30,00,000
<i>Gur</i> (Jaggery)	30,00,000
Sugar	27,54,000
Mustard oil	6,00,000
Kerosene	4,50,000
Salt	2,00,000
<i>Khandsari</i>	1,80,000
Condiments	1,00,000
Cosmetics	1,00,000
Utensils	1,00,000
Dyes, metal sheets, chemicals, leather, cotton-yarn, wool, etc.	85,000
Agricultural implements	4,530

### Trade Centres

There are 12 important markets in the district. Potatoes, wool, woollen goods, ghee, honey, *ringal* baskets and mats, vegetables, herbs, and food-grains, are sold in these markets. The wholesale dealers make a profit of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent to 2 per cent on the sales and they generally sell their merchandise to the retail shopkeepers. In these markets they also buy from the producers, a variety of commodities, such as ghee, honey, potatoes, turmeric, pepper, and vegetables and export them to the plains.

### Fair-price Shops

There were 143 fair-price shops in the district in 1965. The State government appointed certain traders to run these shops in conformity with the rules laid down by it from time to time.

### Trade Associations

There are a number of trade associations in the district but their headquarters are located at Almora. They give technical and legal advice to their members regarding matters pertaining to sales tax, income-tax, octroi, imports and exports. The most important of them

is the Kumaon Motor Operators' Association, which comprises as members the owners of buses and trucks plying in the district.

### Weights and Measures

Formerly a *nali* was the customary standard of capacity. A *nali* of wheat weighed exactly 1.866 kg. or two seers; while that of rice weighed only 1.75 seers. Twenty *muthis* (hand-fuls) made one *nali* and sixteen *nalis* made one *pirai* and twenty *nalis* one *rini*. Similarly, the 80 tola seer was prevalent. Maund, seer and *chatank* also continued besides the above measures. Most of these weights and measures continue even today in the interior of the district. The *nali* was also the unit of area and was generally the area in which one *nali* of wheat could be sown. Traill, standardised the *nali* at 12 yards by 20 yards, or 240 square yards which is equivalent to 200.66 square metres. Twenty *nalis* made a *bisi* or 4,800 square yards.

The metric system of weights and measures was introduced in the district on October 1, 1960, although in the recent Settlement of 1966 the measures used have been the same old ones.





## CHAPTER VII

### COMMUNICATION

The main trade route, connecting the plains in the south with Tibet in the north passes through the district.

A large number of pilgrims came from the plains via Tanakpur and Kathgodam and proceeded to the holy Manasarower and Kailas in Tibet. The pilgrims generally undertook the journey in June and July. The routes from the railheads, Kathgodam and Tanakpur, converged at Askot and reached Manasarowar. From lake Manasarowar, the pilgrims proceeded to Kailas on the last stage of their upward journey. Conductors and guides available at Garbyang, and the Geeta Satsang Kailashkshetra, Naini Tal, conducted pilgrims to these shrines. The Chinese stopped the pilgrimage in 1962.

Pilgrims have been visiting the shrines at Badrinath and Kedarnath for centuries and some of these have followed the Pithoragarh-Karnaprayag route which bifurcated to Badrinath and Kedarnath from Karnaprayag. Now a metalled road connects Karnaprayag with Pithoragarh.

The age-old footpaths and footholds were replaced by bridle-roads about a century ago. The first motor road was constructed in 1946.

The public works department maintains about 360 km. of metalled roads. The department also maintains 625 km. of bridle-roads which are generally unmetalled. The government has laid emphasis on the making of new roads and about 124 km. of metalled roads are under construction.

The forest department maintains about 840 km. of bridle-roads which are mainly located in the broad belt of forests.

The Antarim Zila Parishad maintains about 112 km. of bridle-roads.

The Kali and the Ramganga are the main rivers of the district, through which logs are floated down to the plains. It takes great skill to fell tall trees. Expert wood-cutters assist in the operations. The branches and barks of the felled trees are removed and they are sawn by hand into rectangular 2.13 m. lengths, known as sleepers. The sleepers are first brought to the banks of the rivers which carry

them to Tanakpur. The journey of the sleepers in the rivers begins when there is enough water in them. Men armed with long poles patrol the river banks and push back into the river such sleepers as are stranded on the sand banks or among rocks. Timber worth Rs 4,92,688 and Rs 3,58,068 were floated down in 1965 and 1966 respectively. About 350 men were employed in the trade in 1967.

### **Travel Facilities**

There are eight dharmshalas in the district which are under private management and charge a nominal rent for accommodation but do not supply food.

There are a number of inspection bungalows and rest-houses in the district, which are maintained by different departments mainly for the use of their own officers, but officers of other departments and the public can also be given accommodation in them if it is available. The public works department maintains one dak-bungalow, 13 inspection houses and 20 rest-houses. The Zila Parishad maintains 9 dak bungalows. The forest department maintains 3 rest-houses, 5 wood hutments and one log cabin.

### **Post—Telegraph—Telephone Offices**

**Post-Offices**—The service of runners was instituted in 1886 in the area now covered by the district, and the government levied a cess, called dak cess, and introduced a postal service which was extended to *pattis* and populated localities. The first post-office was established at Pithoragarh in 1886. In addition to mail, medicines were also distributed in times of emergency. In subsequent years some more post-offices were opened and their number rose to 182 in 1967. As more roads are being built and new localities are emerging, more and more post-offices are being established. There are 9 telegraph and public call offices.

### **Broadcast Receivers**

The people are buying more and more radio sets as broadcasting is becoming popular. The number of broadcast receiver licences issued in the district in 1966-67 was 2,588.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS

In 1961, the population of the district consisted of 2,63,579 persons of whom 1,57,777 were workers (86,131 being women), some particulars regarding their occupations, etc., being as follows:

Occupations	Workers		
	Total	Men	Women
Cultivation .. .. .	1,37,811	55,217	82,594
Agriculture .. .. .	1,227	644	583
Mining, quarrying, live-stock, forestry, fishing, hunting, etc.	1,043	954	89
Household industry .. .. .	5,528	3,128	2,400
Manufacturing other than household industry ..	328	304	24
Construction .. .. .	2,461	2,455	6
Trade and commerce .. .. .	1,243	1,217	26
Transport, storage and communications ..	457	457	..
Other services .. .. .	7,679	7,270	409

The number of non-workers in the district was 1,05,802 (49,156 being women).

There is in the district the usual set-up of departments and offices of the State and Central Governments, local bodies, educational institutions, banks, etc.

The number of persons employed within the district under the Central and State Governments and the local bodies in 1965 is given below:

Type of establishment	Number of establishments in September, 1965	Number of employees in September, 1965		
		Men	Women	Total
State Government ..	55	4,697	277	4,974
Central Government ..	3	263	..	263
Local bodies .. .. .	4	1,062	106	1,168
Quasi- government ..	2	57	..	57

The employees of the Central and State Governments and of the local bodies have been granted certain amenities such as provident



fund benefits, medical treatment, housing and dearness allowance, permission to take loans from certain sources, etc. Employees of various departments have the right to form associations and unions to safeguard their service interests.

### **Learned Professions**

**Education**—According to the census of 1961 there were 975 teachers (899 men and 76 women) in the district of whom 102 were employed in higher secondary schools (16 being women), 818 in senior Basic and junior Basic schools (49 being women) and 55 in other places.

The teachers in educational institutions have their own associations to protect and advance their service interests. They are provided with the benefit of provident fund, some employees also getting free quarters for certain duties performed.

**Medicine**—In 1961, there were 63 physicians, surgeons and dentist (2 being women) in the district of whom 36 were allopathic physicians and surgeons (1 being woman), 1 homoeopath, 6 Ayurvedic physicians and 20 other physicians, surgeons and dentists not classified. There were 104 nurses, pharmacists and other medical and health technicians (31 being women) consisting of 31 nurses (3 being women), 25 midwives and health visitors, 31 nursing attendants and related workers (3 being women), 7 pharmacists and pharmaceutical technicians, 6 vaccinators and 4 sanitation technicians.

**Law**—In 1961 there were 9 magistrates, 13 legal practitioners and 8 legal technicians including petition writers.

The Bar Association at Pithoragarh was formed in 1940 when only six lawyers and two mukhtars (revenue agents) were practising in the district. It took the shape of a District Bar Association immediately after the creation of the district in 1960 and in 1965 the number of its members rose to 17.

**Engineering**—In 1961, there were 85 architects, engineers and surveyors, including civil, machanical and electrical engineers, overseers and other engineers, not classified.

### **Domestic and Personal Services**

**Domestic Servants**—Generally domestic servants are employed by well-to-do persons. With the increasing cost of living, many people in both, the urban and the rural areas, often engage part-time employees for doing domestic chores, grazing cattle, etc. A majority

of such servants hails from the rural areas, payment being made monthly, in cash or in cash and kind, and in a few cases in the form of food, clothing and living accommodation.

According to the census of 1961 there were 359 housekeepers, cooks, women servants and related workers (85 being women).

**Barbers**—Barbers have always occupied an important position in the rural life of the country, as they perform important services at the time of marriages, deaths, etc. Formerly a barber acted as a go-between in marriage negotiations but now the parents of the parties usually settle the marriage themselves. In the urban centres the relationship between barber and customer is professional. There were 30 barbers and hair-cutters in the district in 1961.

**Washermen**—In villages most people do their own washing. Now even in towns, the rising prices, and uncertain delivery of clothes, given to Dhobis, have forced people to do their own washing, the pressing of clothes being done either at home or by Dhobis. There were in the district 9 launderers, dry-cleaners and pressers (1 being woman) in 1961. The launderers are mainly located in the urban areas and their charges are quite moderate.

**Tailors**—In 1961, there were 1,091 tailors, cutters and related workers (233 being women) and 2,801 spinners, dyers and related workers (1,976 being women). In the rural areas tailoring is limited to the simple cutting out and sewing of ordinary garments such as shirts, coats, pyjamas, blouses, etc. Tailoring charges vary with the type of garment made, the style, material and the standing of the tailor or shop.

**Other Occupations**—In 1961, there were 853 furnacemen, rollers, cleaners, moulders and related metal workers (100 being women) ; 122 precision instrument makers, watch-makers, jewellers and related workers ; 47 tool makers, machinists, plumbers, welders, platers and related workers ; 13 electricians and related electrical and electronic workers ; 267 carpenters and related workers ; 2 painters and paper-hangers ; 9 potters, kiln workers, glass and clay formers and related workers ; 52 millers, bakers, brewers and related food and beverage workers ; 201 craftsmen and production process workers (36 being women) ; 393 directors, managers and working proprietors of financial institutions ; 1,179 clerical and related workers ; 15 social scientists and related workers ; and 25 draughtsmen and science rural engineering technicians.

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## CHAPTER IX

### ECONOMIC TRENDS

#### LIVELIHOOD PATTERN

#### Workers, Non-workers and Livelihood Classes

The 1961 census has classified workers into nine livelihood classes or industrial categories described below :

- I Cultivators—Persons engaged in cultivating their lands, themselves or through hired labour, or managing tenant-ed land
- II Agricultural labourer—Persons engaged in agricultural operations on land pertaining to others, for wages in cash or kind
- III Persons engaged in mining, quarrying, forestry, fish-ing, hunting and activities connected with live-stock, plantations, orchards and allied pursuits
- IV Persons engaged in household industry run on a scale smaller than that of a registered factory by heads of households themselves or mainly by the members of one household sometimes with hired labour, mostly at their homes
- V Persons engaged in industries other than household industry
- VI Persons engaged in construction and maintenance of buildings, roads, bridges, dunes, canals, etc.
- VII Persons engaged in trade and commerce, buying and selling, import and export, banking, insurance, stocks, shares, etc.
- VIII Persons engaged in the transport and warehousing industries and in the postal, telegraphic, telephonic, wireless, information and broadcasting services
- IX Persons engaged in services such as the public utility, administrative, educational, scientific, medical, health, religious, welfare, legal, personal or miscellaneous ones or those connected with business organisations as well as recreation

Those engaged in non-productive work, even though earning an income, were classified as non-workers.



The information, given in the following statements, about workers and non-workers, as gathered from the records of the census held in 1961, may be of interest :

## STATEMENT A

*Distribution of Workers into Livelihood Classes and that of Total Population into Workers and Non-workers*

Livelihood classes of workers					Numbers
I	Male	..	..	..	55,217
	Female	..	..	..	82,594
	Total	..	..	..	1,37,811
II	Male	..	..	..	644
	Female	..	..	..	583
	Total	..	..	..	1,227
III	Male	..	..	..	954
	Female	..	..	..	89
	Total	..	..	..	1,043
IV	Male	..	..	..	3,128
	Female	..	..	..	2,400
	Total	..	..	..	5,528
V	Male	..	..	..	304
	Female	..	..	..	24
	Total	..	..	..	328
VI	Male	..	..	..	2,455
	Female	..	..	..	6
	Total	..	..	..	2,461
VII	Male	..	..	..	1,217
	Female	..	..	..	26
	Total	..	..	..	1,243
VIII	Male	..	..	..	457
	Female	..	..	..	..
	Total	..	..	..	457
IX	Male	..	..	..	7,270
	Female	..	..	..	409
	Total	..	..	..	7,679
Workers	Male	..	..	..	71,646
	Female	..	..	..	86,131
	Total	..	..	..	1,57,777
Non-workers	Male	..	..	..	56,646
	Female	..	..	..	49,156
	Total	..	..	..	1,05,802
Total population	Male	..	..	..	1,28,292
	Female	..	..	..	1,35,287
	Total	..	..	..	2,63,579

## STATEMENT B

*Percentage Distribution of Workers into Livelihood Classes and that of Total Population into Workers and Non-workers*

Livelihood class		Pithoragarh district	Uttar Pradesh
I		52.28	24.99
II		0.47	4.42
III		0.40	0.23
IV		2.10	2.44
V		0.13	1.09
VI		0.93	0.29
VII		0.47	1.44
VIII		0.17	8.54
IX		2.91	3.63
Workers	Male	27.81	30.48
	Female	32.68	8.64
	Total	59.86	39.12
Non-workers	Male	21.49	21.91
	Female	18.65	38.97
	Total	40.14	60.88
Total population	Male	48.67	52.39
	Female	51.33	47.61
	Total	100.00	100.00

## STATEMENT C

*Tahsilwise Distribution of Workers into Livelihood Classes and that of Total Population into Workers and Non-workers*

Livelihood class	Tahsil Dharchula	Tahsil Didihat	Tahsil Mansyari	Tahsil Pithoragarh	District total
I	15,851	53,791	15,310	52,859	1,37,811
II	239	382	180	426	1,227
III	273	493	67	210	1,043
IV	1,492	1,017	1,819	1,200	5,528
V	57	121	21	129	328
VI	503	176	1,044	738	2,461
VII	405	195	167	476	1,243
VIII	105	101	111	140	457
IX	903	1,551	660	4,565	7,679
Workers	19,828	57,827	19,379	60,743	1,57,777
Non-workers	12,738	38,691	10,998	43,375	1,05,802
Total	32,566	96,518	30,377	1,04,118	2,63,579

## STATEMENT D

*Distribution of every 1,000 Males/Females into Workers and Non-workers and of Workers according to Livelihood Classes*

Livelihood class			Pithoragarh district	Uttar Pradesh
I	Male	..	430	370
	Female	..	611	112
II	Male	..	5	51
	Female	..	4	35
III	Male	..	7	4
	Female	..	1	1
IV	Male	..	24	34
	Female	..	10	14
V	Male	..	2	20
	Female	..	..	1
VI	Male	..	19	5
	Female	..	..	..
VII	Male	..	10	26
	Female	..	..	2
VIII	Male	..	4	18
	Female	..	..	..
IX	Male	..	57	60
	Female	..	3	11
Workers				
	Male	..	558	582
	Female	..	637	181
	Total	..	599	391
Non-workers				
	Male	..	442	418
	Female	..	363	819
	Total	..	401	609

The statement shows that of the total population of the district 599 per thousand is economically active, 558 per thousand being male and 637 per thousand being female. Female participation in economic activity is considerably high, female workers exceeding 550 per thousand in the rural areas being found in districts Uttar Kashi. Chamoli, Pithoragarh, Tehri Garhwal, Garhwal and Almora. It also appears that in the district 435 males and 615 females per



thousand workers of the two sexes are engaged in agricultural activities.

STATEMENT E  
*Numbers of Females for every 1,000 Males of Corresponding Livelihood Class and amongst Workers and Non-workers*

Livelihood class						Pithoragarh district	Uttar Pradesh
I	..	..	..	..	..	1,496	289
II	..	..	..	..	..	905	602
III	..	..	..	..	..	93	166
IV	..	..	..	..	..	767	366
V	..	..	..	..	..	79	39
VI	..	..	..	..	..	2	19
VII	..	..	..	..	..	21	67
VIII	..	..	..	..	..	..	7
IX	..	..	..	..	..	56	177
Workers						1,202	283
Non-workers						867	1,799
Number per 1,000 males						1,054	909

STATEMENT F  
*Percentage of Workers in each Livelihood Class to Total Number of Workers in Pithoragarh/U. P.*

Livelihood class						Pithoragarh	Uttar Pradesh
I	..	..	..	..	..	87.34	63.89
II	..	..	..	..	..	0.78	11.30
III	..	..	..	..	..	0.66	0.60
IV	..	..	..	..	..	3.50	6.24
V	..	..	..	..	..	0.21	2.78
VI	..	..	..	..	..	1.56	0.74
VII	..	..	..	..	..	0.79	3.68
VIII	..	..	..	..	..	0.29	1.38
IX	..	..	..	..	..	4.87	9.39
Total						100.00	100.00

## STATEMENT G

*Percentage of Agricultural Workers to Total Number of Workers in District/U. P.*

Agricultural workers	Percentage	
	Pithoragarh district	Uttar Pradesh
<b>Cultivators</b>		
Total .. .. .	87.35	63.88
Male .. .. .	77.07	63.62
Female .. .. .	95.89	64.78
<b>Agricultural labourers</b>		
Total .. .. .	0.66	11.30
Male .. .. .	0.90	9.05
Female .. .. .	0.68	19.24
<b>All agricultural workers</b>		
Total .. .. .	88.01	75.18
Male .. .. .	77.97	72.69
Female .. .. .	96.57	84.02

Of the total workers in the district 88.01 per cent are engaged in agricultural pursuits, cultivators being 87.35 and agricultural labourers 0.66 per cent. More than 96 per cent of the total female workers and about 78 per cent of the total male workers are engaged in agricultural pursuits. Approximately there is one agricultural labourer for every 129 workers in the district, the corresponding figures in the State and the country being 9 and 6 respectively.

## STATEMENT H

*Categories of Non-workers in the District and their Numbers in each Category*

Categories of non-working population	Males	Females	Total
Full-time students .. .. .	20,962	3,404	24,366
Persons engaged only in household duties .. .. .	25	2,220	2,245
Dependents, infants and disabled persons .. .. .	35,193	43,279	78,472
Retired persons and people of independent means .. .. .	88	72	160
Beggars, vagrants, etc. .. .. .	105	153	258
Inmates of penit., mental and charitable institutions .. .. .	30	5	35
Persons seeking employment for first time .. .. .	153	6	159
Persons unemployed and seeking work .. .. .	90	17	107
<b>Total .. .. .</b>	<b>56,646</b>	<b>49,156</b>	<b>1,05,802</b>

## GENERAL LEVEL OF PRICES AND WAGES

## Prices

About the middle of the nineteenth century, Pithoragarh, which then lay in district Kumaon, was one of the chief markets of that

district. The prices which ruled for the sale and purchase of food-grains in the market were generally quite high, because the cost of importing food-grains was almost prohibitive. The agriculturists, short of food, did not go to the market but approached friendly neighbours who lent them the required quantities of food-grains on easy terms.

Wheat and common rice were then sold at 40 seers to 50 seers and fine rice at 24 seers to 30 seers to a rupee. About the year 1900, when Pithoragarh came to be included in district Almera the average rates per rupee were 10 seers to 12 seers for wheat, 4.5 seers to 7 seers for fine rice and 7.5 seers to 10 seers for common rice. In 1908, a famine year, wheat was sold at 5.25 seers per rupee. The conditions did not materially change till 1912 when normal conditions set in and rates per rupee sagged to 12.44 seers for wheat and 7.5 seers for common rice. With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 the price level registered a steep rise and in 1916 it was about 55 per cent higher than that in 1912, the price of wheat and common rice in 1916 being about 8 seers and 5 seers respectively for a rupee. These prices continued to prevail with slight fluctuations till 1920-22 when the district was hit by drought. Wheat was sold in 1922 at 2.5 seers to a rupee. Excepting this period of scarcity, the price level of 1916 continued to obtain till 1928-29. From 1930 onwards prices began to fall owing to the world-wide economic depression and in 1932 wheat, barley and common rice sold at around 12 seers, 17 seers and 10 seers to a rupee respectively. In 1936 the prices recovered to the level of 1930 at which they began to stabilize. In 1939, the prices started showing an upward tendency as a result of the outbreak of the Second World War and in the years that followed prices achieved unprecedentedly high levels. During the period 1944-49 the average rates for wheat, rice and gram were 2.9 seers, 2.5 seers and 3.3 seers per rupee. The average yearly urban retail prices of certain food-grains for certain years from 1950 up to 1965 are given in the following statement :

Year	Rates* (in seers per rupee)		
	Common rice	Wheat	Gram
1950	2.0	1.81	3.33
1955	2.22	2.0	4.0
1960	2.0	1.81	3.83
	(1.86)	(1.69)	(3.57)
1965	1.33	1.33	2.0
	(1.24)	(1.24)	(1.86)

\*The figures in brackets indicate rates in kg. per rupee



As elsewhere in the State, prices tended to come down in 1954 and registered a definite fall in the following year only to rise again in 1956, when for the first time, fair price shops which sold certain food-grains and atta at subsidized rates were opened. Later on the Hill Provisioning Scheme was introduced in the district under which wheat (imported), rice and atta were supplied by the government for distribution to the public through fair price shops. The number of such shops was 88 in 1960 and swelled to 150 in 1965.

The wholesale rates of certain commodities, other than food-grains and their products, prevalent in the district from 1961 to 1965 are mentioned in the following statement :

Year	Wholesale rates (in Rs per quintal)				
	Jaggery	Ghee	Mustard oil	Fire-wood	Tobacco
1961	43	490	241	3.75	80
1962	42	536	289	3.75	85
1963	39	590	289	3.75	90
1964	69	640	344	3.75	100
1965	75	804	571	4.00	166

### Wages

About the middle of the nineteenth century agricultural labourers mostly belonged to the Scheduled Castes and were paid wages in the form of food-grains and also received certain annual gifts from the employers. An ordinary labourer in the district earned from 2 to 4 annas a day but accepted Rs 5 or Rs 6 per month if paid on monthly basis. The duties of syce, messenger, water-carrier, garden coolie, etc., were generally performed by those belonging to land-owning families, their wages being about Rs 6 per month. Masons, carpenters and blacksmiths of ordinary skill earned from Rs 10 to Rs 12 per month, whereas skilled artisans earned about double this wage.

While wages generally assumed an upward trend after the First World War, unskilled and skilled labour hardly earned more than Re 0.50 and Re 0.75 a day respectively till about 1934 when the wage level receded because of world-wide economic depression of 1930's, the wages of an unskilled and a skilled labourer coming down to Re 0.35 and Re 0.69 respectively. This low level of wages

persisted till about 1939 when the Second World War broke out, giving a filip to wages. After the Second World War (1939-45) wages appreciated considerably and those of an ordinary labourer rose to about Rs 1.50 per day while those of a skilled labourer (mason, carpenter, blacksmith, etc.) to about Rs 2.50 per day. Between 1948 and 1954 casual labourers were paid from Rs 1.50 to Rs 2.50 a day and the labourers in a gang about Rs 1.19 and skilled labour from Rs 2 to Rs 5.

About 1945, a Dotiyal coolie, i.e., a coolie from Doti in Nepal, when engaged by tourists, official and non-official, and traders, was paid Rs 2.50 a day, when on the march, and Rs 2.00 a day when not on the march. A Kumaoni coolie earned lower wages on engagement, viz., Rs 2.00 a day when on the march, and otherwise only Rs 1.5 a day.

The wages continued to move upwards with the rise in prices and for an unskilled labourer stood, in round figures, at Rs 2.00 in 1955, at Rs 2.50 in 1960 and at Rs 3.00 in 1965. The wages of skilled labour were nearly double the rates of wages for unskilled labour. The wages in the interior of the district were higher approximately by 50 per cent.

The agricultural labourers worked eight hours a day exclusive of an hours' rest. The rates of their wages, which are paid in cash, were Rs 5.00 for ploughing, Rs.4.00 for weeding, Rs 3.50 for trans-plantation and Rs 3.00 for irrigation and reaping in 1966.

The wages for some occupations prevailing in Pithoragarh town in 1966 are mentioned in the statement below :

Type of worker	Unit of work/period			Average wages (in rupees)
Barber	{ ..	Per shave	.. ..	0.25
	{ ..	Per hair-cut	.. ..	0.62
Blacksmith	..	Per day	.. ..	5.0
Carpenter	..	Per day	.. ..	5.0
Casual labourer	..	Per day	.. ..	4.0
Chowkidar	..	Per month	.. ..	80.0
Domestic servant	{ ..	Per month (without food)	.. ..	70.0
	{ ..	Per month (with food)	.. ..	40.0
Driver (Truck)	..	Per month	.. ..	150.0
Gardener	..	Per month	.. ..	50.0
Herdsman	{ ..	Per month (per cow)	.. ..	2.0
	{ ..	Per month (per buffalo)	.. ..	4.0
Midwife	..	Per delivery of child	.. ..	9.0
Porter	..	Per maund (37.3 kg.) of load carried for a mile (1.6 km.)	.. ..	1.0
Scavenger	..	Per month (for cleaning a latrine once a day)	.. ..	0.25
Wood-cutter	..	Per maund (37.3 kg.) of wood	.. ..	1.0

## GENERAL LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT

The District employment exchange at Pithoragarh was established on February 11, 1965, prior to which the area was served by a guide of the employment exchange, Almora, posted at Pithoragarh, who helped the people in matters of registration and its renewal and in attending to their enquiries, etc. Seekers of employment were actually put in touch with the prospective employers by the employment exchange, Almora. An account of the salient features of information collected and work done at the exchange in 1965 is given below :

Year	Vacancies notified by employers	No. of persons registered for employment assistance	No. on 'live register'	No. of persons finding employment				
				Domes- tic service	Teach- ing	Techni- cal	Govt. service	Other fields
1965	1,198	4,924	1,233	..	221	762	626	..

## Employment Trends

An analysis of employees in 1965 according to their spheres of activities is given in the following statement :

Industry	No. of reporting establishments	No. of employees		
		Private sector	Public sector	Total
Agriculture, live-stock, cereals and sugarcane	4	..	618	618
Construction (of roads, etc.)	16	..	1,708	1,708
Electricity and water service	2	..	96	96
Trade and commerce	3	..	59	59
Transport, storage and communications	2	..	34	34
Services	38	35	4,296	4,331
Total	65	35	6,811	6,846

Number of employees in the public sector (government, quasi-government and local bodies organisations) in 1965 is as follows :

Type of establishments	No. of reporting establishments	No. of employees		
		Men	Women	Total
Central Government	3	589	..	589
State Government	55	4,685	296	4,981
Quasi-government (Central)	2	56	..	56
Quasi-government (State)	2	5	16	21
Local bodies	2	1,071	93	1,164
Total	64	6,406	405	6,811





### Unemployment Trends

The following statement gives information about the types of employment applied for, and the numbers and sexes of persons who sought these jobs as on 31st December, 1965 :

Of employment applied for	No. of job seekers as on December 31, 1965		
	Men	Women	Total
Professional, technical and related work ..	20	5	25
Clerical and allied work .. ..	28	1	29
Farming, fishing, hunting, logging and related work	10	..	10
Transport and communication .. ..	21	..	21
Trade of craftsmen, workers in production and labour- ers not elsewhere classified	51	2	53
Service, sports and recreation .. ..	196	..	196
Unclassified work .. ..	878	21	899
Total .. ..	1,204	29	1,233

The number of job seekers given in the above statement may be classified according to educational standards as follows :

Educational standard	1965		
	Men	Women	Total
Graduate and post-graduate .. ..	18	1	19
Intermediate .. ..	27	..	27
Matriculate .. ..	216	2	218
Below matriculation .. ..	588	14	602
Illiterate and literate (without educational level) ..	355	12	367
Total .. ..	1,204	29	1,233

### Demand for Workers

There was no demand for workers in the private sector as on December 31, 1965 on which date the unfilled vacancies under various establishments in the public sector were as follows :

Central Government establishments .. ..	293
State Government establishments .. ..	119
Quasi-government establishments .. ..	3
Local body .. ..	20
Total .. ..	435

**Placement in Employment**—The employment exchange placed 450 applicants in employment during 1965, in various occupations as follows :

Occupations	Number of applicants placed in employment	Percentage
Professional and technical work ..	43	9.6
Clerical work .. ..	10	2.1
Crafts .. ..	282	62.7
Farming, fishing, etc. .. ..	19	4.2
Transport and communications ..	7	1.6
Services and activities connected with sports and recreation	89	19.8
<b>Total</b> .. ..	<b>450</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Workers in Short and Surplus Supply

Enquiries conducted by the exchange in the quarter ending in December 1965 revealed that the numbers of painters, fishermen, trained men and women compounders, compressor operators, cane-men, road roller drivers, X-ray technicians and overseers available were inadequate.

In ministerial services there was an acute shortage of typists and stenographers in Hindi and English.

Clerks, unskilled workers and workers with no previous training or experience and educated persons having recently left schools and colleges were surplus to demand.

### NATIONAL PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Before the creation of the district in 1960, there were four development blocks. Now four more blocks have been established. All these blocks were in the second stage in 1965.

The evolution of a block originally covered four stages but since 1958 the number of these stages has been reduced to three stages I and II and post-stage II. The duration of the first and second stages is five years each from the date of inception ; that of the last has not been fixed. There is no separate post of district planning officer in the district. The deputy commissioner has been given the powers of a deputy development commissioner and each subdivisional



officer is in charge of planning work in his sub-division. A sub-divisional magistrate at headquarters co-ordinates the work of all the block development officers and the sub-divisional officers, and acts as a link between them and the district magistrate.

A district advisory committee was established in May, 1960, to suggest programmes for the development of the district and to review the progress made by various departments. The district magistrate is the chairman of the committee, the subdivisional officer, headquarters is the secretary and members of the State legislature and Parliament representing the district, a representative of each development block committee, four non-officials nominated by the State Government, two non-officials nominated by the district magistrate and some heads of local offices concerned with development activities are its members.

The U. P. Kshettra Samitis and Zila Parishads Adhiniyam, 1961, is not applicable to the district but block development committees have been formed in each block, of which all the Pradhans of Gaon Sabhas included in the block, members of State legislature and Parliament who belong to the district, eight representatives of the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes and eight women are members. The block development officer is secretary of the committee. The *adh-yaksh* (president) is elected by members from amongst the non-official members. Each block has a block development officer who is the administrative and executive head of the entire block organisation. He is assisted by six assistant development officers for agriculture, co-operatives, animal husbandry, public health, minor irrigation and industries. In addition there are an assistant development officer (women), co-operative supervisors, stockmen, and panchayat secretaries. Each block has 10 village level workers and two Gram Sevikas (women workers) to assist the woman assistant development officer in women's and children's welfare work.

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## CHAPTER X

### GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The district of Pithoragarh (formerly a tahsil of Almora district) was created in 1960 and was one of the three districts of the erstwhile Uttarakhand Division and since 1968, one of the three districts of Kumaon Division the charge of which is held by a commissioner whose headquarters is at Naini Tal. He is the link between the district under him and the government.

#### District Sub-divisions

The district is divided into four sub-divisions—Pithoragarh (which is the district headquarters), Didihat, Dharchula and Mansyari—each comprising a tahsil of the same name and being conterminous with a *kanungo* circle in charge of a *kanungo*. These circles are further divided into 24 permanent *patwari* circles, 10 being in the Pithoragarh, 7 in the Didihat, 4 in the Dharchula and 3 in the Mansyari tahsil. One of the special features of the administration in these hill districts is that the *patwari* has been conferred with police powers as well.

#### District Staff

The district is in the charge of an officer who is designated district magistrate and deputy commissioner. As district magistrate he performs the duties and exercises the powers conferred on a district magistrate under the Code of Criminal Procedure and many special Acts. He holds a key post and is the pivot of the district administrative machinery. He is the highest authority in the district for the maintenance of law and order, in which he is assisted by the magistracy and the police. As deputy commissioner, his most important duties are the collection of government revenue and other dues recoverable as arrears of land revenue, the maintenance of the land records of the district and providing assistance to the rural population in times of natural calamities. He is also responsible for the due accounting of all monies received in and paid by the treasury. He is in overall charge of the execution of schemes of planning and development in the district, his main function being the co-ordination of the activities of different nation-building departments. He is also the president of the district soldiers', sailors' and airmen's board, which looks after the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families.

In order to assist him in the work of administration, there are under him 4 sub-divisional officers of the provincial civil service, each holding charge of a sub-division, and 4 tahsildars, each in charge of a tahsil and assisted by a *naib* tahsildar. The deputy commissioner is also assisted by a treasury officer and a district supply-cum-town rationing officer, who also functions as the rent control and eviction officer and the district relief and rehabilitation officer.

The police organisation in the district is headed by a deputy superintendent of police, who is vested with the powers of a superintendent of police. For purposes of police administration, the district has been divided into two circles, each under the charge of a circle inspector, one with headquarters at Pithoragarh and the other at Dharchula.

In this district the executive has not been separated from the judiciary and the district and sessions judge, Kumaon, has also jurisdiction over this district. For registration work, the district magistrate is also the district registrar. To dispose of civil cases of Pithoragarh and Chamoli there is only one *munsif*, who takes up the case work of both the districts in turn.

#### Other District Level Officers

The designations of other officers who have their offices in the district and work under the administrative control of their own heads of department are listed below :

- Assistant General Manager, Roadways
- Assistant Registrar, Co-operative Societies
- Civil Surgeon
- Deputy Superintendent of Police
- District Agriculture Officer
- District Employment Officer
- District Horticulture Office
- District Industries Office
- District Information Officer
- District Inspector of Schools
- District Harijan and Social Welfare Officer
- District Live-stock Officer
- District Medical Officer of Health
- District Organiser, Prantiya Rakshak Dal

Executive Engineer, Local Self-government Department  
Executive Engineer, Irrigation Department  
Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Askot  
Sub-divisional Officer, Hydro-electricity Department  
Superintending Engineer, Public Works Department

#### CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES

**Income-tax**—For purposes of income-tax the district comes under the jurisdiction of the income-tax commissioner, Lucknow. An income-tax officer posted at Naini Tal used to look after the work of the district till 1969. However, an income-tax officer has been posted at Almora now and he looks after the work of this district also.

**Central Excise**—There is in the district an inspector who is designated as border examiner (land, custom and central excise). He is under the administrative control of the assistant collector, central excise division, Bareilly. A sub-inspector is also posted in the district.

**Indian Posts and Telegraph**—The district comes under the jurisdiction of the superintendent of post-offices, Almora division, which comprises the districts of Almora and Pithoragarh (with its headquarters at Almora). A postmaster is in charge of the head post-office of the district which is located at Pithoragarh town. Sixteen sub-postmasters, each in charge of a sub-post-office are posted in different parts of the district, and two inspectors are posted at Pithoragarh and Birinag (Didihat tahsil).

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# CHAPTER XI

## REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

### LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

#### Early Fiscal History

Prior to its gradual conquest, annexation and occupation by the Chand rajas of Kumaon (between *circa* 1500 and 1675 A. D.), the region covered by the present district of Pithoragarh was divided among a number of petty chiefships such as those of the Rajwars of Askot, the Rawats of Sirakot, the Dams of Shor, the Mankoti rajas of Gangoli, the Khassa Thakurs of Darma and Danpur and the rajas of Jumla who held the bulk of the northern tract. Most of these chiefs owed allegiance to the Rainka rajas of Doti, but were for all practical purposes autocratic rulers in their small domains. The ultimate ownership of the entire land vested in the ruler who realised from his subjects besides the tax on land under cultivation several other taxes and cesses, the land revenue being generally assessed at one-sixth to one-third of the produce and payable mostly in kind.

Som Chand (*circa* 953—974 A. D.), the founder of the Chand dynasty, is said to have reviewed village rights and constitution, revived the ancient system of village headmen and sub-divided the country into *pattis* (a *patti* being a revenue circle consisting of a group of villages in the hills), placing each under a semi-independent ruler. It is not known what part or parts, if any, of the present Pithoragarh district were held by him or his immediate successors, but as the system, in course of time, came to be applied to the whole of this district, the importance of Som Chand's contribution is appreciable. One of the Bam rajas of Shor (which covered the bulk of the present Pithoragarh tahsil and had its capital at Udaipur near Pithoragarh town) is said to have appointed one Jainda Kiral as settlement officer who measured the entire cultivated and culturable land of the kingdom, assessed each plot according to its value and recorded the demand against each cultivator. Jainda Kiral, however, fell prey to a conspiracy and all the records so labouriously prepared and compiled by him were burnt to ashes. In the last quarter of the 15th century, the then Chand raja, Ratan Chand, is said to have made a tour through the outlying *pattis* of his territory, which appear to have included parts of this district, and to have made a settle

ment with the resident cultivators. Balo Kalyan Chand (1555—1565 A.D.) conquered and annexed the kingdoms of Gangoli and Shor and his son, Rudra Chand (1565—97 A.D.), annexed Sira, Darma and Johar. He also conquered Askot, but the Rajwars were allowed to continue as tributaries of the Chands. Karu Gosain, a junior member of the Askot family, was, on account of his personal knowledge of the locality, appointed by Rudra Chand to settle the revenues of the Darma and Johar *pattis* of this district. In the time of Lakshmi Chand (1597—1621 A.D.), his brother Shakti Gosain, though blind, was reputed for his administrative skill and his land settlements made this region memorable in history. By the time of Baz Bahadur Chand (1638—78 A.D.), who invaded Tibet and consolidated his hold not only over the northern region but also over the passes and the northern frontiers, the entire district of Pithoragarh had come under the direct control of the Chands, excepting Askot, the tenure of which the raja himself investigated, confirming the orders made by his predecessors.

During the rule of the Chands (which lasted till 1790 A.D.), the royal revenues were not wholly confined to a land tax, but included dues of various kinds and in addition taxes on commerce, mines, the administration of justice, law proceedings and forest produce. The cattle owners who made and sold ghee had to pay at the rate of four annas for each she-buffalo owned by them. The *gaicharai* (grazing tax) was levied on the pasture lands immediately below the hills. The weavers were subject to a separate tax. In mines the government's share amounted to one-half. In the assessment of agricultural land, the revenue demand was rated at only one-third of the gross produce in ordinary lands and at one-half in the very fertile. The collection was made in two forms, it being imposed one year on the land and in the second year levied by a capitation tax on the inhabitants. Thus the agricultural assessment or *sirti* (cash payment) as originally fixed was very light, and its rate and amount appear to have been rarely revised. Hence, in order to meet the increasing expenditure of the state numerous other taxes were successively imposed on the landholder, of which the principal ones were capitation tax and house tax, and the whole was summed up under the designation of *chhattis rakam* (36 items of revenue) and *battis kalam* (32 items of ministerial fees). These numbers appear to have been used arbitrarily as including the regular and contingent cesses, the total to which the landholder was liable never actually amounting to 68, but still onerous enough to leave him little beyond the means

of subsistence. In practice the occupancy tenants, *khaikars* and *kainis*, paid to the free holders from one-third to two-fifths of the gross produce. Rents were commonly paid in kind (*kut*) at an invariable rate fixed on the land and payable in some specified description of grain without reference to the annual fluctuations in the amount and nature of the produce.

When the Gurkhas conquered this region in 1790, they augmented the tax on agriculture but abolished most of the 68 extra taxes, retaining only the *nankar* (capitation tax), *landkar* (loom tax), *mijhari* (tax on Doms), *ghikar* (tax on ghee), *salami* (presents to officials) and *seniya phagun* (offerings on festivals) from among the 36 *rakam* and only the fees payable to the *kanungo*, *kamin* and *padhan* from among the 32 *kalam*. Besides these, the military commanders to whom various portions of the territory were assigned made unscrupulous exactions. In Samvat 1864 (1807 A. D.), the Gurkhas made a regular settlement which was fixed generally on actual scrutinizing of each village. This system lasted till 1815 A. D. when the British constituted the district of Kumaon, which included the present districts of Pithoragarh, Almora and Naini Tal, and started making their own settlements.

### Past Settlements

**Early Settlements**—During the British rule the first Settlement of this area was made in Samvat 1872 (1815-16 A.D.) by Gardner, the first commissioner of Kumaon, who based his assessment on the actual receipts of the Gurkhas Settlement during the preceding year and determined the amount payable in the currency of the East India Company instead of keeping it partly in Gurkha currency and partly in kind, as had hitherto been the practice. The second Settlement was made by Traill, Gardner's successor in office, in 1817, with the *padhans* (headmen) for their respective villages. This Settlement was for whole *pattis* and not for individual villages; and in working it out the records of the Gurukha Settlement of 1807 were also referred to. The Settlement was made only for one year, but it introduced the system of realising the revenues through the *padhans* for the first time. The third Settlement was made in 1818 for a period of three years, and this time with the village proprietors themselves. The fourth Settlement was made in 1820, for another period of three years. The fifth was made in 1823 for a period of five years, and this time the village records were prepared and the village boundaries described, these being still known as the *assi-sal* as it was the Samvat

year 1880. The sixth Settlement was made in 1828-29 for a period of four years and in 1832 the seventh was made for only one year. All these Settlements were made by Traill and the government demand increased with each successive Settlement. The eighth in the series was made in 1833-34 by Gowan, who tried to induce the landholders to agree to an engagement for 20 years.

**Batten's Settlement**—It was the 9th and made in 1842-46 for a period of 20 years. The assessments were based upon those of the expiring Settlement and resulted in a further enhancement of the demand. It was Batten who for the first time framed rules for the leasing and management of estates, the appointment of *padhans*, the fixation of village boundaries and settlement of disputes concerning them, for determining the right to waste land, pasture grounds and forests, for computing the assessable area of estates and for the measurement of land. The record of rights prepared by him for each village contains a complete description of the rights of every occupant, the past history of the assessments, boundary arrangements, the engagement paper (*ikrarnama*) of the inhabitants in regard to the remuneration of the *padhan* and the collections of all sorts to be made under the heads *thokdari*, *sayanachari* and *hissedari* dues and to certain regulations relating to public service and good administration, and the *fard-phant* which showed the names of the *padhans*, the distribution of the revenue payers amongst the several *padhans*, where there were more than one, the quotas of revenue payable by the several share-holders or occupants, the division of the non-proprietary tenantry amongst those recorded as proprietors, and the names and liabilities of the *pahi-kasht* (a kind of cultivator) and other cultivators. In addition to these documents, a memorandum (*rubakari*) summarising the whole was prepared. The boundary arrangements (*chaknamas*) made with the agreement of the villagers at that time are still found useful.

**Backett's Settlement**—The tenth Settlement of the region was made by Backett during 1863-73 A. D. for a period of 30 years and is considered, for its procedure and results, to be the most important one. For the first time the entire cultivated area was actually measured and all the culturable area was classified into permanent cultivation, casual cultivation and waste. The term 'waste' meant terraced land thrown out of cultivation and did not include the grassy slopes or forests within the nominal area of a village. The area of each field was computed separately and could be identified on the corresponding village maps prepared for the purpose. All the land

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in the village was then brought to one common standard of quality, the *upraon doyam* (second class dry land) being selected as the standard and each of the other three classes being interpreted in terms of this land by trebling the 'irrigated', by adding one-half to *upraon awwal* (first class dry land) and by reducing 'land under casual cultivation' by one-half. Finally, an average rate of one rupee per *bisi* (a little less than an acre) of the standard quality land (*upraon doyam*) was fixed for purposes of revenue assessment, the incidence when applied to the whole assessable area working out to Rs 0—13—10 per *bisi*. As a result of this Settlement, the demand was almost doubled over the previous assessment. The systematic villagewise records and other papers prepared during this Settlement gave unprecedented stability to the revenue administration in this area and are still found useful.

**Settlement of 1899—1902**—The eleventh Settlement was made by Goudge who was assisted by Dharmanand Joshi, after whose name it is still remembered in the district. At this settlement no attempt was made to alter the work of the previous Settlement, but all the new land since brought under cultivation was measured and assessed at the rates fixed in 1873. Moreover, an adequate enhancement for improvements was imposed on each *patti* in proportion to its progress since the last Settlement. The newly added areas were shown in red ink on the old village maps.

### **Fiscal History of Bhct**

The fiscal history of the *pattis* now comprising the two northern tahsils (Dharchula and Mansyari), has been somewhat different from that of the rest of the district. This region had for a long time been ruled by the semi-independent Rajwars of Askot on behalf of the Chand rajas of Kumaon. The assets made available to the government demand were looms, profits of trade, produce of agriculture, produce of jungles (roots and drugs), musk, hawks and wild bees' nests. The entire tribute was to be paid in gold dust which was, for mutual convenience, of ten commuted into silver and gold and was levied alternately on land and property. The government's share was imposed on each pass in one sum and the detailed assessments were usually left to be settled by the *burhas* (village headmen) concerned among themselves. When the Gurkhas captured this region (in 1790) they subjected the inhabitants to very heavy exactions, the demand for Johar being Rs12,500, for Darma Rs10,000, and for Byans Rs 5,000, in addition to about an equal amount a irregular demands of Gurkha military commanders. Consequently,

the people were reduced to the verge of ruin and Bhakti Thapa, a Gurkha officer, was deputed to revise the Settlement. The result was that the total demand for this region was reduced to Rs 17,700. When the British took over in 1815 and made their first Settlement, they based their assessment on the actual collections of the previous year, but as a more favourable rate of cash commutation in respect of dues hitherto paid in kind, was allowed and that, too, in terms of Indian currency (Farrukhabadi rupees) in place of the Gurkha money, the nominal assessment was virtually reduced by about 25 per cent. In 1818, taxes on trade, musk, bees' wax and hawks were abolished and the revenue demand for Johar, Darma, Byans and Chaudans was thus reduced to a total of Rs 4,130. At the Settlement of 1840-41, the taxable items were confined to only two, the produce of the fields and that of the forests, which were assessed to a total of Rs 4,791. In 1872, this amount was raised to Rs 7,883 and in 1902 to Rs 10,255. In these last three Settlements the principle adhered to was to tax the people on the basis of their general prosperity derived from whatever source, trade or agriculture.

**Settlement of Askot**—Pargana Askot, which comprises the two *pattis* of Askot Malla (now in tahsil Dharchula) and Askot Talla (now in tahsil Pithoragarh), has been a sort of impartible estate in which the rule of primogeniture was strictly applied and the whole of which belonged to one family. The head of the family was known as the Rajwar, his eldest son as Lala and the younger as Gosain. It was originally a branch of the ancient Katyuri dynasty and had set up an independent kingdom in this area about the 13th century A. D. Towards the end of the 16th century, it was conquered by the Chand rajas of Almora, but the Rajwars were restored to their possessions and allowed to continue as semi-independent allies of the Chands who exacted from them an annual tribute of Rs 400 only. The Gurkhas in their time increased this tribute to Rs 2,000 and also abrogated the law of primogeniture which gave rise to dissensions in the family on the death of the then Rajwar. Hence, when the British stepped in, there were two claimants to the estate, one a brother and the other a son of the deceased Rajwar, and both were made to engage for the revenue. Family dissension and litigation between rival parties continued, resulting in 1847 in the transfer by sale of the estate to an outsider. However, in 1855, Pushkarpal, the then head of the Rajwar family, bought it back and since then it continued to be the property of the family as before, till the enforcement of zamindari abolition in 1966. Askot has been perhaps the only instance in the

whole of Kumaon of a large zamindari which in many respects resembled a talukdari estate of Avadh. As a result of the different revenue settlements during the last century the cultivators in most of the villages of Askot Talla and the more anciently settled villages of Askot Malla, came to be recorded as *khaikars* (occupancy tenants) under the Rajwar and paid to him the government demand together with 100 per cent *malikana* (proprietary dues). Elsewhere, the villages were recorded as the Rajwar's *khudkasht* (own cultivation) but cultivated by *sirtans* (tenants at will). The government demand for the whole pargana was fixed in 1872 at Rs 1,250, which was raised to Rs 1,450 in 1902. Between 1923 and 1938, three formidable agrarian agitations were started by the *sirtans* of this tract, which resulted in a new and separate Settlement of the pargana of Askot in 1940—42. The area was for the first time cadastrally surveyed, the record of rights prepared, and the *sirtani* tenure also, for the first time, found place in the records. At this Settlement, which still continues, the revenue demand including cess, for the whole pargana was further raised to Rs 5,203.

### Present Settlement

The district of Pithoragarh as a separate unit of administration came into existence in February 1960 and the present Settlement for which operations were started in October 1960, is the first Settlement of the district as such, although in the series of past Settlements relating to this area, it is the 12th. In this district the area under cultivation and habitation is only one-fifteenth of its total area, the rest being covered by forests, mountains, snow peaks, rivers and lakes. This Settlement covered the entire district excepting pargana Askot for which a Settlement had already been made in 1940—42. The entire cultivated and uncultivated land within the village boundaries, except the uncultivated area in 103 villages of tahsils Mansyari and Dharchula, was for the first time measured by the modern plane table and chain method, the area of each field being computed by the area-conb system in *nalis* (a *nali* being equivalent to 1/20 of a *bisi* which represents a little less than an acre) and *mutthis* (a *mutthi* being equal to 1/16 of a *nali*). The total land thus measured came to 89,88,564 *nalis* 13 *mutthis* (cultivated 24,13,955 *nalis* 1 *mutthi* and uncultivated 65,74,609 *nalis* 12 *mutthis*), whereas the cultivated area at the last Settlement had been only 10,75,592 *nalis* 9 *mutthis* which has now increased by 124 per cent. But as only 20,89,345 *nalis* 15 *mutthis* of the cultivated area was assessed, the rest being exempted from revenue on account of being government land or in posses-



sion of government establishments or that of its *sirtans* or in unauthorised possession, the actually assessed area increased by only 94 per cent. The rate of assessment of land revenue was the same as in the previous Settlement, but on account of the increase in area of assessable land, primarily because of the modern methods of measurement used, and the improvement in the quality of land due to new irrigation facilities and introduction of improved methods of cultivation, the revenue demand rose from Rs 62,328 to Rs 1,38,619 (including cess), thus showing an enhancement of 122 per cent over the preceding demand. The assessable area in pargana Askot was also deemed to have increased since 1942 from 2,67,128 *nalis 7 mutthis* to 3,27,288 *nalis 4 mutthis* and consequently the demand for that pargana was also raised from Rs 5,204 to Rs 7,190. Thus the total revenue demand for the whole district at the present Settlement came to Rs 1,45,809 (including cess), showing an overall increase of Rs 78,277 or 116 per cent.

Land which was not under actual cultivation during the period of Settlement operations but had been so before or was likely to become so in future was termed *be-parat* or *parat-vahak* land and of this a portion was recorded as part of the *hissedari* of the State government and the rest as that of the village *hissedars* (proprietors).

Assignments of land revenue for the maintenance of particular temples, places of worship, etc., are known as *gunths*, and in the district there are 29 wholly and 62 partly *gunth* villages. The total area under *gunth* is 42,240 *nalis 12 mutthis* and the *gunth* revenue therefrom is about Rs 2,617 which is dedicated to and distributed among the temples of Badrinath, Kedarnath (both in district Chamoli), Hatkalika, Rameshwar and Patal Bhuvaneshwar (all in district Pithoragarh). The other revenue free grants (including probably *sadabart* grants) in the district amount to Rs 489. The fee simple estates of Jhaltola, Chaukodi and Berinag are also exempt from payment of revenue which amounts to Rs 2,557.

At this Settlement, the number of *khata*s (proprietary holdings) on which revenue demand was imposed was Rs 45,062 that of the villages covered by the Settlement was 1,628 and the families affected numbered 50,000. The total amount of money spent on the Settlement was Rs 28,84,690. The work took five years to complete and the report accepted by the State government in October 1965\*.

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\*For fuller details of the settlement see *Zila Pithoragarh ki Settlement Report*, published by the U. P. Board of Revenue, (Allahabad, 1966)



**Collection of Land Revenue**—Although the Kumaun and Uttarakhand Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1960, which proposes to abolish the old method of revenue collection, has been enforced in the district with effect from July 1, 1966, the method hitherto employed has continued to remain in force till March 31, 1967. According to this practice land revenue is realised through the *padhan* (headman of a village from whom revenue engagement is taken and who is made responsible for collecting and paying in the revenue of the village) who is also known as *malgajar*. He is assisted in his work by the *patwaris*, police and the *thokdars*. For their labour the *padhan* gets 5 per cent and the *thokdar* 3 per cent of the collections made from the whole village. In some villages the *padhans* are given land in lieu of cash payment and such land is known as *padhanachari* land, the proprietary rights of which vest in the government and the *padhan* concerned is entered in the records as a *sirtan* of that land. The collection work of the *padhans* and *thokdars* is supervised by the tahsildars concerned and the ultimate responsibility of collecting land revenue in the district rests with the collector of the district who is assisted by his subdivisional officers. He also functions as settlement officer for the district, maintains land records, keeps them up-to-date and is in ultimate charge of the government treasury in the district. The revenue demand from the district for Fasli 1373 (1965-66 A.D.) was Rs 1,38,617 and 9 paise, and that for Fasli 1374 was also the same, but as there were arrears amounting to Rs 66,213 and paise 61 with respect to the previous Fasli year the recoverable demand as on July 1, 1966 was Rs 2,04,830 and paise 70 only.

### **Survey, Settlement and Re-settlement**

There is no indication in the final report of the present Settlement as to when the next survey, Settlement or resettlement of the district will take place. But, it is not likely to take place before the expiry of a period of 40 years and the interval between succeeding Settlements will again be 40 years. If there is a substantial decline in the price of agricultural commodities and it continues for some time an interim revision may be undertaken.

## **LAND REFORMS**

### **Relations between Landlords and Tenants**

The system of land tenures obtaining in the district has been different from that of the plains. There have been four types of

tenures here—*hissedari*, *pakka khaikari*, *kacheha khaikari* and *sirtani*. The ultimate ownership of land has been that of the ruling power, whether it were the ancient local chiefs, the Chand rajas, the Gurkhas, the British or the present Indian Union. Persons, who had acquired proprietary rights over land through grants or rewards for services, or those who had got their names recorded as proprietors at the beginning of the British rule by taking advantage of the ignorance of local cultivators, or were considered to be the original cultivators of their land at that time, or acquired proprietary rights through *nayabad* grants or through purchase of such rights from others, have been known as *hissedars*. They are equivalent to the zamindars of the plains. Most of the land under cultivation in the district has been cultivated by these holders of proprietary rights, the *hissedars*. Every *hissedar* possessed an ascertained area of land and has been responsible for the payment of land revenue with respect to it to the government. The *hissedar* has been free to sell or otherwise dispose of his holding but he could only transfer his interest in the undivided *gaon sanjait* (village common land), without specifying fields. Villages, where actual cultivators of land were other than those who subsequently acquired *hissedari* rights therein, were known as *khaikari* villages and the actual cultivators as *pakka khaikars* who were a sort of under proprietors. The *khaikar* paid the government, the revenue demand with respect to his land, plus a cess which was to be paid to the *hissedar* of the village. The interest of a *khaikar* was heritable but not transferable. But if there was any *khudkashi* land of the *hissedar* in a village, the actual cultivator cultivating it since the beginning was known as *kacheha khaikar* and was for all practical purposes an occupancy tenant of that land. He paid *malikana* dues to the *hissedar* plus the government revenue, his interest also being heritable but not transferable. The main difference between the two types of *khaikars* was that in the case of a *pakka khaikar* dying heirless his land reverted to the entire *khaikari* body of the village whereas in case of a *kacheha khaikar* dying heirless his land reverted to the *hissedar*. The fourth category is that of the *sirtans* who were tenants-at-will or *assamis* of the *hissedars* or of the *khaikars* and cultivated their land of the latter who themselves could not do so for some reason or the other. The *sirtans* paid to them rent known as *sirti* in cash or kind. There have also been some rent-free grantees in the district.

In the earlier days of British rule, land for cultivation was easily available here, and there, was no pressure of population on it, most of the area lying uninhabited and uncultivated. The cultivators were, therefore, very much in demand by the proprietors. In fact,

the demand for cultivators exceeded that for land. It secured the most favourable terms to all *sirtans* who paid less rent—only a little more than the actual government revenue assessed—than any other class of tenants. The legal status of such a cultivator was, however, no better than that of a tenant-at-will. He had no permanent rights whatever and made his own engagement with the proprietor, usually only for one crop at a time, and was not even entered in the record of rights. The *sirtans* were completely ignored in the past Settlements; no records were prepared regarding their holdings and no length of possession could save them from being ejected. Ejectment was voluntary and law gave the *sirtan* no protection; he could only claim a compensation for improvements made by him.

With the passage of time pressure on land increased and disputes between the landed proprietors (*hissedars* and *khaikars*) and the *sirtans* started. Although village records were available since the Settlement of 1873, the land revenue and tenancy laws of this area remained uncodified, only the decisions of the commissioners of Kumaon and in a few cases of the board of revenue had the authority of statutory law. In 1918, the Kumaon Tenancy Rules were framed and the Land Revenue Act, 1901, as modified for hill tracts, was also extended to this area. The continued insecurity of tenure led to open discontent, particularly among the *sirtans* of the Askot raj. As this estate, comprising 154 villages, was an impartible one, and the land there was held mostly by *khaikars* and *sirtans*. They had to pay to the Rajwar, in addition to the rent due (in cash or kind), a number of miscellaneous dues known as *bisaudi*, *baikar*, *tika*, *nazrana*, *begar*, *olag*, *bellbase* and *besase*. These exactions were resented by the tenants as being onerous. Prolonged resentment at last took form of serious agrarian agitations in Askot in the years 1923, 1927-28 and 1937-38, in order to voice the *sirtans'* demands for fixity of tenure, abolition of all miscellaneous dues and exactions, and commutations of grain rent into cash. The lot of the *sirtans* in the rest of the district was no better. They normally paid to their landholders half of the produce of land of good quality and one-third of that of average quality, and suffered under the same insecurity of tenure and fear of ejectment, which made them actively sympathetic to the *sirtans* of Askot. With the formation of the first Congress ministry in U. P. in 1937, this agitation gained momentum and a large number of *sirtan* volunteers from Askot marched to Lucknow for redress of their grievances. The result was that an order of the Board of Revenue, U. P., dated July 15, 1938, stopped ejectment of the *sirtans* of the district till further orders. Another result of the agitation of



1938 was that a survey and Settlement of pargana Askot was undertaken in 1940-42, at which the *sirtani* tenure was for the first time shown in the records, the rates of rent to be paid by the *sirtans* to the Rajwar were fixed and the miscellaneous exactions, which used to be made by the Rajwar from them, were abolished. Thus the *sirtans* of Askot got both fixity of tenure and of rent. By an order dated August 31, 1945, the government modified the order of 1938 and made provisions for the ejectment of the *sirtans* in certain cases. Consequently, a number of ejectment suits came up before the courts and the *sirtans* again began to feel insecure. In 1954, the Kumaun Agricultural Lands (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act was enacted, which declared illegal dispossession a criminal offence, put further checks on ejectments, provided a definite procedure for commutation of grain rent into cash rent and even permitted subletting by the *sirtans* in certain cases. This Act for the first time codified the law relating to the *sirtans* and provided considerable relief to them. At the present Settlement (of 1960-65) of the district, the *sirtans* were duly recorded and *khatauni* slips issued to them, but the *sirtani* tenure has still not been made heritable and the landlord has been left at liberty to allow or disallow the son or the heir of the deceased *sirtan* to continue in possession of the holding.

The greatest advance so far towards improving the status and ameliorating the condition of the tenants of the district has been the Kumaun and Uttarakhand Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1960, which has been made applicable to this area with effect from July 1, 1966. The object of this Act is to abolish zamindari rights in the entire district and to transform the existing tenures into those of *bhumidhars*, *sirdars* and *assamis*, who will all be practically masters of their land and pay the revenue direct to government without there being any intermediaries. As the work of preparing the prescribed statements and other relevant records relating to the implementation of the Act has not yet been completed, the area involved, the number of zamindars affected and of the *bhumidhars*, *sirdars*, *assamis*, etc., who will come into existence in place of the old *hissedars*, *khaikars*, *sirtans*, etc., are not, however, known, nor has the amount of compensation payable to the former zamindars been determined.

#### ADMINISTRATION OF TAXES OTHER THAN LAND REVENUE

The other main sources of the income of the government in the district are excise, sales tax, entertainment tax, stamps, registration, 27 Genl. (R)—18



taxes on motor vehicles, income-tax including estate duty, etc., and central excise.

### Excise

The duty on spirits locally manufactured and on hemp drugs has formed a portion of government revenue ever since the occupation of this area by the British in 1815. Up to 1821, the whole of Kumaon (including this district) and British Garhwal were included in a single farm, but after that the Kumaon region was separately farmed. In 1894, an excise inspector on preventive duty was appointed for the whole of Kumaon Division and till 1899 the farming system remained in vogue, according to which the right to sell liquor throughout the district used to be farmed to a single contractor, and, for the sake of convenience, the farm was further subdivided among smaller contractors. Since its enactment, the U. P. Excise Act, 1910, has governed the import, export, transport, manufacture, sale and possession of intoxicating liquors and drugs and the excise revenue derived from duties, fees, taxes and fines. No intoxicant can be imported into the district without a permit and the payment of prescribed duty, nor can it be exported from the district unless duty has been paid. The manufacture of liquor and other spirituous preparations can be undertaken only under a license from the excise commissioner. Rates of excise duty are fixed by the State government. Since the creation of the district in 1960, the district magistrate, Pithoragarh, has been responsible for the administration of the excise department here, the necessary powers being delegated to one of his subdivisional officers who is called the district excise officer. The district falls in the Moradabad excise range which is under the charge of an assistant excise commissioner. The district itself forms an excise circle in the charge of an excise inspector.

**Liquor**—In 1966-67, there were in the district 7 licensed shops for the sale of country liquor, one each being located at Pithoragarh, Wadda, Askot, Thal, Mansyari, Tejam and Dharchula, and one for the sale of foreign liquor at Pithoragarh. For the year 1967-68 the number of licensees dealing in country liquor, was reduced to 6 and that of those dealing in foreign liquor increased to 2, licenses were also issued to military units located in the district. The consumption of country liquor in the district increased from 33,228 litres in 1961-62 to 92,561 litres in 1965-66.

Up to March 31, 1963, supply of country liquor to the licensed shops in the district was made by the bonded warehouse, Haldwani (district Naini Tal), but after that date the supplier has been the

Rampur Distillery which makes the supplies through its wholesale country spirit depot functioning at Pithoragarh proper, at the rates of Rs 2.09 per bulk litre of plain white spirit, Rs 2.08 per bulk litre of plain green spirit and Rs 6 per bulk litre of spiced liquor. Indian-made liquor including beer is imported by the licensees direct from different distilleries.

**Opium**—There is no licensee for the sale of opium in the district, the supply to registered opium addicts (only 2 in 1965-66) being made on medical permits by the treasury and the sub-treasuries through the agency of the tahsildars concerned at the rate of Rs 9 per *tola* (or 11.66 gm.). The total consumption of opium in the district in 1965-66 was 469.8 gm.

**Other Drugs**—There are no licensed shop for authorised sale of *chandu*, *madak*, charas, bhang, ganja and cocaine in the district.

Thus the total excise revenue of the State government from the district of Pithoragarh for the year 1965-66 was Rs 12,29,737.

### Sales Tax

In the district, sales tax is levied under the U. P. Sales Tax Act, 1948, which came to be applied to this area since July 1948, and under the Central Sales Tax Act, 1956. The former has undergone several amendments such as reducing the limit of taxable turnover from Rs 15,000 to Rs 12,000, enhancement in the registration fee from Rs 6 to Rs 10, provision for taxing the dealers at single or multiple points, according to the commodities involved, and the changes made in the number and types of goods taxed.

For purposes of sales tax the district is included in the Almora sub-circle which is under the charge of the assistant sales tax officer, Almora, who works under the sales tax officer, Naini Tal.

### Entertainment Tax

Entertainment tax in the district is levied under the provisions of the United Provinces Entertainment and Betting Tax Act, 1937, and has so far been realised from the two cinemas, the Natraj Cinema, Pithoragarh and the Sangeet Cinema, Dharchula, functioning in the district. The district magistrate is in charge of collecting this tax. The collections made from the Natraj Cinema were Rs 32,562 in 1964-65 and Rs 95,958 in 1965-66, and from the Sangeet Cinema Rs 2,417 from April 1965 to 19th June, 1966.

### Stamps

The revenue, under this head, is derived from the sale of judicial and non-judicial stamps and includes fines and penalties imposed

under the Indian Stamp Act, 1899. Judicial stamps are used for purposes of paying court fees and non-judicial stamps are affixed on bills of exchange and other deeds or documents as specified in the Act and on receipts involving a sum exceeding twenty rupees.

Stamps are sold only by licensed stamp vendors, but they are authorised to sell only those of value up to Rs 25, stamps of higher denominations are sold direct by the treasury and the tahsil sub-treasuries.

The revenue, derived from stamps in the district, and the number of licensed stamp vendors for the five years from 1960-61 to 1964-65 were, as under :

Year	Sale of stamps (to nearest rupee)		Number of licensed vendors
	Judicial	Non-judicial	
September 1960 to March 1961	11,578	3,665	22
1961-62	21,015	21,809	18
1962-63	28,425	20,271	17
1963-64	31,305	30,003	20
1964-65	37,871	31,208	21

### Registration

Documents, such as deeds of sale, gift, lease and mortgage of immovable property and instruments relating to shares in a joint-stock company, bills, etc., are required to be registered under the Indian Registration Act, 1908. Since May 1, 1965, the district magistrate, Pithoragarh is the district registrar for purposes of this Act, and is assisted by a part-time subregistrar posted at the district headquarters, having jurisdiction over the entire revenue district of Pithoragarh. The income under this head during the 1965-66 was Rs 9,333 and paise 30 only, and the expenditure was Rs 7,886 and paise 42 only.

### Tax on Motor Vehicles

The revenue, under this head, is derived from taxes imposed under the U. P. Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1935, the U. P. Motor Gadi (Yatrikar) Adhiniyam, 1962, and the U. P. Motor Gadi (Malkar) Adhiniyam, 1964, and from the fees charged under the U. P. Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940. For the purposes of these laws, the district forms part of the Kumaon region, which is under the jurisdiction of a

regional transport officer with his headquarters at Naini Tal. This officer is assisted by a passenger tax officer and a goods tax officer, both posted at the regional headquarters. A passenger tax superintendent is posted at Pithoragarh proper. As districtwise figures of collection of these taxes, etc., have not been maintained, separate figures for the district of Pithoragarh are not forthcoming and the available figures relate to the entire Kumaon region which comprises the districts of Pithoragarh, Almora and Naini Tal. The figures (to the nearest rupee) for the whole region for the year 1965 were as follows :

U. P. Motor Vehicles Taxation Act	.. Rs	14,12,831
U. P. Motor Vehicles Rules	.. Rs	1,39,668
U. P. Motor Gadi (Yatrikar) Adhiniyam	.. Rs	4,60,131
U. P. Motor Gadi (Malkar) Adhiniyam	.. Rs	75,854

The revenue under the last two Acts in 1965-66 was Rs 3,48,481 and Rs 6,14,946 respectively.

### Income-tax

For purposes of income-tax, the district of Pithoragarh came under the jurisdiction of the income-tax officer, Naini Tal, with effect from June 20, 1966, prior to, which it was under the charge of the income-tax officer, Bareilly. Appeals against the assessment orders passed by the income-tax officer lie to the appellate assistant commissioner incometax, Bareilly.

In 1965-66, the number of assessees each with income under Rs 5,000 was 44 and the total amount of tax realised from them was Rs 34,000, whereas there were 19 assessees each with an income above Rs 5,000 who paid in all Rs 39,000 as tax.

There are no cases reported for the district of wealth tax, gift tax and expenditure tax.

For estate duty the district falls under the estate duty circle Lucknow, but no case of the levy of this duty is forthcoming from the district.

### Central Excise

For purposes of central excise, the district of Pithoragarh is under the charge of the border examiner, land customs and central excise, Pithoragarh, his headquarters being known as the border check post, Pithoragarh. He functions under the administrative control of the assistant collector central excise, Bareilly, and is himself assisted by an inspector and a subinspector. His duty is to look after the functioning of the Indo-Nepal border check posts in the district and



the tobacco licensees and goldsmiths of the district and the tea factory at Berinag (also in the district). The most important taxable commodity under this head in the district is tea, for which the figures of central excise revenue from 1961-62 to 1965-66 were, as given below :

Year	Revenue (to nearest rupee)				
1961-62	..	..	..	..	6,707
1962-63	..	..	..	..	5,653
1963-64	..	..	..	..	6,298
1964-65	..	..	..	..	6,829
1965-66	..	..	..	..	6,565

## CHAPTER XII

### LAW AND ORDER AND JUSTICE

#### LAW AND ORDER

During the British occupation of the area, now covered by the present district, law and order did not present any particular problem. In fact, the small number of cognizable offences rendered the police an object of secondary importance. In 1816, murder was a crime almost unknown, and theft and robbery of rare occurrence. Affrays of a serious nature were seldom heard of, and even petty assaults were infrequent. While a number of robberies occurred in the tract along the foot of the hills, almost all of them were perpetrated by people from the plains, who went back with their booty. The noticeable common offence was that of adultery, but it seldom formed a subject of complaint in court, unless accompanied by abduction of the adulteress. The deterrent system of punishment and the severe ordeals to which the accused was subjected during pre-British days, had effectively checked the incidence of crime in this area.

#### Crime

Statement I, which follows, shows the number of cognizable crimes reported to the police, and non-cognizable cases sent up for trial, and their results. In Statement II figures of important crimes and the results of prosecution are given.

STATEMENT I

Year	Cognizable crimes						Non-cognizable crimes				
	Cases pending investigation at the beginning of the year	Cases reported to police	Cases investigated	Cases sent to courts	Cases pending in courts at the beginning of the year	Cases disposed of			Cases tried in courts	Cases ending in conviction	
						Convicted	discharged or acquitted	Compounded			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1961	4	12	10	11	6	3	3				
	0	3	3	2	1	2	0	..	..	..	
1962	1	34	30	14	9	2					
	0	10	10	0	10	0	..	..	10	..	

[Continued

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1963	$\frac{6}{1}$	$\frac{41}{3}$	$\frac{39}{3}$	$\frac{20}{4}$	$\frac{17}{2}$	$\frac{17}{4}$	$\frac{2}{0}$	..	128	28
1964	$\frac{6}{0}$	$\frac{53}{48}$	$\frac{53}{48}$	$\frac{24}{34}$	$\frac{20}{1}$	$\frac{15}{31}$	$\frac{7}{3}$	$\frac{3}{0}$	84	19
1965	$\frac{5}{1}$	$\frac{49}{69}$	$\frac{41}{67}$	$\frac{14}{75}$	$\frac{18}{14}$	$\frac{12}{72}$	$\frac{1}{3}$	..	56	2
1966	$\frac{8}{0}$	$\frac{102}{80}$	$\frac{98}{80}$	$\frac{36}{42}$	$\frac{25}{6}$	$\frac{27}{41}$	$\frac{9}{1}$	..	87	9

N.B.—The numerator represents figures relating to offences under the Indian Penal Code and the denominator those falling under special and local laws

## STATEMENT II

Crime	Year				
	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Murder</b>					
Reported	..	..	..	1	2
Convicted	..	..	..	..	..
Acquitted	..	..	..	1	..
<b>Theft</b>					
Reported	11	3	14	20	59
Convicted	4	2	4	2	5
Acquitted	2	1	..	..	..
<b>House-breaking/Burglary</b>					
Reported	..	4	10	13	16
Convicted	..	2	5	4	2
Acquitted	..	2	2	2	..
<b>Kidnapping</b>					
Reported	1	1	..	1	3
Convicted	..	..	..	..	..
Acquitted	1	1	..	..	..
<b>Sex-crimes (376/377 I. P. C.)</b>					
Reported	2	1	1	3	1
Convicted	1	..	..	1	1
Acquitted	1	1	1	1	..

Cases of dacoity and robbery are conspicuous by their absence.

## Organisation of Police

In the early part of this century, there were no regular police in the areas now covered by the district. It was only during the pilgrim season that wayside guard houses, with accommodation for 2 or 3 constables, were occupied by the regular police, sent by the superintendent of police, Kumaon. The roads travelled by pilgrims were patrolled daily.

Almora, from which the district has been carved out, was divided into two parts for police administration. The regular police administered in important towns like Almora and Ranikhet and the rest of the district of Almora was under the charge of the revenue police.

The existence of a system of revenue police is a distinguishing feature of the Kumaon division. The regular revenue officials are invested with police powers and function under the Rules and Orders, Kumaon Division. Formerly, the few peons attached to the courts and tahsils performed with the assistance of the *patwaris*, *thokdars* and *padhans*, the duties of apprehending offenders and escorting prisoners. The *padhan* arrested the offenders and reported crimes to the *patwari* and provided for the dispatch of persons charged with heinous offences for trial. The *thokdars* supervised the work of the *padhans* and were bound to report crime overlooked by the latter. They were exempt from the provisions of the Indian Arms Act, in respect of a gun and a sword. The *padhans* were also the headmen of their villages and required to perform all the duties assigned to them in the enactments then in force.

In 1950, a police-station for regular police was set up at Pithoragarh. The jurisdiction of the police-station at Pithoragarh extended besides the town, to all motor roads. A considerable number of villages, preferably within a radius of about 8 km., of the police-station, were attached to this police-station after 1951.

Since 1960, when the district was created, there have been two parts of the police organisation (a) revenue police and (b) the district executive police, the details of each being given below :

### Revenue Police

The revenue police (also known as village police) is under the district magistrate who exercises the powers of the superintendent of police for the revenue police. The district is divided into *pattis*, each consisting of several villages and under a *patwari* who exercises the



powers similar to those of a station officer of a police-station, in addition to his revenue duties. Though he has only one peon to assist him, all the headmen (known in Kumaon as *malguzars* or *padhans*) of the villages in his circle, afford him the necessary assistance in the discharge of his duties. The regular police also, whenever possible, assist him in the investigation of serious crimes. In the revenue police organisation, there are superintendent *patwaris*, commonly known as *kanungos*, who exercise all the powers and functions of a circle inspector of the regular police.

### District Executive Police

The district executive police is headed by a deputy superintendent of police who has been delegated the powers of a superintendent of police. The district falls within the jurisdiction of the deputy inspector general of police, Hill Range with head quarters at Naini Tal. The executive police has three broad divisions—the civil police, the armed police and the prosecution unit.

In Pithoragarh itself there is a judicial lock-up in which only under trials are kept. The tahsildar of Pithoragarh tahsil is in charge of this lock-up. As there is no revenue lock-up, all defaulters of government dues are also kept in this magisterial lock-up.

## JUSTICE

### Early History

Previously, the local chieftain or ruler, either himself or through his officers, dispensed justice. During the brief Gurkha rule, the administration of justice was still more autocratic and each officer exercised jurisdiction according to his position. All civil and petty criminal cases were disposed of by the commandant of the troops to which the tract was assigned, while cases of importance were disposed of by the civil governor of the province (covering the present district), assisted by military chiefs who happened to be present at his headquarters. During the commandant's absence the *bechari* (his deputy) officiated.

A brief oral examination of the parties was conducted in court and if there was any doubt about the veracity of a statement, a copy of *Harivamsha* was placed on the head of the witness, who was then required to depose the truth. When the evidence of eye-witnesses was not procurable or the testimony was conflicting, as in the case of boundary disputes, certain ordeals had to be undergone. There forms of such ordeals were in common usage : *gola-dip* (carrying

a bar of red hot iron in hand for a certain distance), *karhai-dip* (the accused was required to punge his hands in boiling oil and was acquitted if they were not burnt), and *tarazu-ka-dip* (weighing the accused person against stones and reweighing him the next morning. If after reweighment an increase in weight was found, the person was held guilty. The judgment was recorded on the spot and witnessed by the bystanders and then handed over to the successful party, whilst the other was mulcted in a heavy fine proportionate more to his means than the importance of the case.

In cases of disputed inheritance and commercial dealings, frequent recourse had to be taken to the *pahchayats* or councils of arbitrators. These were, however, disposed of by lot before an idol in a temple and also by swearing before the idol. Some of these temples are still in existence.

Treason alone was punished with a death sentence. Murder, if committed by a Brahmana, brought a sentence of banishment. For others, and for all other crimes, fines were imposed and property confiscated. The wilful destruction of a cow, or the infringement of caste by a Dom, such as touching the hookah of a Brahmana or a Rajput, were also punished with death. Under the Chand rajas, death was inflicted by hanging or beheading, but the Gorkhalis introduced capital punishment after torture.

After the treaty of Sigauli, the British who took over control of the administration tried to effect some improvements, mostly confined to the maintenance of law and order.

### Civil Justice

In 1815, E. Gardner was appointed as the first commissioner of Kumaon and was authorised to administer both revenue and police. He was succeeded in 1817, by Traill, who was not only an administrator but also framed certain laws for Kumaon and for many years his was the only court.

In 1820, an eight-anna court-fee stamp was introduced by Traill on his own authority. If the plaint was not rejected in the first instance, the plaintiff was furnished with a notice to be served on the defendant by himself. It was found that in three-fourths of the cases, the practice resulted in a compromise, and when ineffectual the defendant was summoned, the parties and their witnesses, if necessary, were called and examined. Oaths were seldom administered and no law agents were permitted to practice. A suit seldom lasted more than twelve days.

The first *munsif* was appointed in Kumaon, in 1829, for the cognizance and adjudication of civil claims. Later, seven *kanungos* were invested with the title and powers of *munsif*. In 1838, the Sadr Board of Revenue was invested with final powers in all fiscal matters. In the same year the whole of Kumaon was made subject to the jurisdiction of the Sadr Diwani Adalat, Agra, in civil matters, The Assam Rules (with certain limitations) were promulgated in 1839 for the administration of civil and criminal justice and remained in force till 1863, when the Jhansi Rules were passed and introduced. They provided for the extension of the laws of limitation to Kumaon and declared that the Indian Penal Code would be in force. The Kumaon Rules came into force in 1894, and in 1906 various portions of the Land Revenue Act of 1901 were extended, to the Kumaon Division.

Prior to 1953, the deputy commissioner, Almora, exercised jurisdiction over Pithoragarh as civil judge and took cognizance of all original civil suits cognizable by civil court, subject to the provisions of section 15 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. Some assistant collectors of the first class were invested with the powers of a civil judge for all original suits the value of which did not exceed Rs 5,000 throughout the limits over which they exercised jurisdiction as assistant collectors. Similarly, assistant collectors of the second class, other than tahsildars were invested with the powers of a *munsif* for all original suits of which the value did not exceed Rs 500. The jurisdiction of the assistant collector, who was a tahsildar extended to all original suits of a nature cognizable by a court of small causes under the Provincial Small Cause Court Act, 1887, of which the value did not exceed Rs 100. Such jurisdiction was exercised by virtue of notification no. 543/VII-421, dated April 1, 1926. The court of the commissioner functioned as a high court in civil matters but the government could refer cases decided by the commissioner to the high court of judicature at Allahabad for opinion in order to arrive at a correct decision.

In February, 1952, the power of a civil judge, exercisable by the deputy commissioner, were withdrawn and subdivisional magistrates were invested with the powers of a *munsif* in respect of all civil suits the value of which did not exceed Rs 5,000.<sup>1</sup>

With effect from July 16, 1953, the powers of the *munsif* conferred on the assistant collectors and judicial officers were also withdrawn.

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1. Notification no. 6317/VII-1203-48, dated February 12, 1952

A regular court of *munsif* at Pithoragarh was created. However, in view of the low institution of cases at Pithoragarh, the court of the *munsif*, Pithoragarh, was kept in abeyance with effect from March, 1954, and the *munsif* of Almora was asked to dispose of the civil cases of Pithoragarh district also. This practice still continues. The *munsif*, Almora, has jurisdiction to try civil cases up to the valuation of Rs 250 and regular suits up to a valuation of Rs 5,000 for Pithoragarh as well. Civil cases above the valuation of Rs 5,000, cases under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, and those relating to guardianship, succession, probate, trust, letters of administration and land acquisition, are filed in the court of the district judge of Kumaon, who also bears appeals against the judgements and decrees passed by the *munsif*.

The number of suits pending at the beginning and the end of 1965, and the number of cases instituted and disposed of in the civil courts in 1965 are given below :

Cases	Number
Pending at the beginning of 1965	105
Instituted in 1965	85
Disposed of in 1965	70
Pending at the end of 1965	120

In 1966, the number of suits instituted for immovable property was 47 and that for money and movable property was 62.

The number of suits of different valuations, that were instituted in 1966, is given in the following statement :

Valuation of cases	Number
Not exceeding Rs 100	20
From Rs 101 to Rs 1,000	78
From Rs 1,001 to Rs 5,000	10
From Rs 5,001 to Rs 10,000	1
Exceeding Rs 10,000	..



The number of suits disposed of in 1966 is given in the following statement :

Details of disposal	Number
Disposed of after trial	23
Dismissed in default	2
Otherwise decided without trial	42
Decreed <i>ex-parte</i> ..	13
Decided on admission of claims	2
Settled by compromise	11
Settled by arbitration	..

The number of civil appeals instituted and disposed of in 1966, was as follows :

Nature of civil appeals	Number instituted	Number disposed of
Regular civil appeals	19	16
Miscellaneous civil appeals	1	1
Rent appeals	..	..

### Criminal Justice

Criminal justice during the earlier year of British rule gave little trouble. Traill writes, "In petty thefts, restitution and fine were commonly the only penalties inflicted; in those of magnitude, the offender was sometimes subjected to the loss of a hand or of his nose. Crimes of the latter description have, however, in these hills, been extremely rare, and did not call for any severe enactment. Acts of omission or commission, involving temporary deprivation of caste, as also cases of criminal intercourse between parties connected within the degree of affinity prescribed by the Hindu law, offered legitimate objects of fine. Adultery among the lower classes was punished in the same manner".

In former times the husband of the adulteress could inflict the capital punishment on the adulterer after informing the executive government. The practice resulted in deaths of many innocent persons at the hands of jealous husbands who found themselves both judges and executioners. But from 1817, this was declared an offence punishable with death and thus effectually it put an end to a custom which was one of the most frequent sources of hereditary feuds.

Under Regulation X of 1817, which was enacted in July of the same year, a commissioner was appointed for the trial of heinous offences subject to a report to the Sadr Nizamat Adalat, who passed the final sentence, which was then carried into effect by the local officer. For Nepali criminals it was settled that only those should be delivered to the Nepal authorities who were charged with heinous offences and for whose arrest the warrant afforded *prima facie* evidence that they were guilty of the offences imputed.

From 1828, some of the criminal cases were sent up for trial in the court of the judge at Bareilly. From 1836, the trial by various ordeals was also abolished, and from 1843 rules pertaining to the punishment of adultery were also enforced in Kumaon. Till March, 1914, the commissioner continued to be the sessions judge and heard appeals of the judgments of the district magistrate and his subordinate magistrates and tried cases committed by them to his court. In the same year<sup>1</sup> this arrangement was changed and new sessions division, to be called the Kumaon sessions division, consisting of the revenue districts of Almora, Garhwal and Naini Tal, was established under the district judge of Pilibhit. In 1930, Pilibhit district was excluded from the limits of the Kumaon sessions division.<sup>2</sup> Since then the sessions judge of Kumaon, whose headquarters are now at Naini Tal, has been exercising jurisdiction over the area now covered by the district of Pithoragarh.

In 1960, on its formation, the district comprised four subdivisions, each having a subdivisional magistrate with first class powers, with headquarters at Dharchula, Mansyari, Didihat and Pithoragarh. There are tahsildars (with second class magisterial powers), posted in tahsils Dharchula, Mansyari, Didihat and Pithoragarh which are co-terminous with the subdivisions.

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1. Notification no. 1314/VI-48 1914, of March 26, 1914, Judicial Department

2. Notification no. 2151/VI, of June 16, 1930

Details of cases committed to criminal courts and the number of persons tried and sentenced in 1964 and 1965 are given in the statement that follows :

Cases/persons tried/sentences	Number in lower courts		Number in sessions court	
	1964	1965	1964	1965
<b>Cases</b>				
Affecting life	11	10	6	3
Kidnapping and forcible abduction	16	6	..	2
Hurt ..	48	43	1	1
Unnatural offences	..	1	..	1
Extortion	..	..	..	..
Other cases	562	611	..	3
Persons tried	1,099	1,046	5	19
Persons sentenced to :				
Death	..	..	..	..
Rigorous imprisonment	30	18	2	2
Fine	436	384	1	..

### Separation of Judiciary and Executive

The judiciary has not been separated from the executive in the district.

### Nyaya Panchayats

In August, 1949, under the U. P. Panchayat Raj Act, 1947, the number of panchayati *adalats* (now called *nyaya* panchayats) that were established in the district (then a tahsil) for entrusting judicial work to the village people, was 41. In 1960, the number increased to 46. The jurisdiction of a *nyaya* panchayat extends from 5 to 23 *gaon sabhas* depending on the population. The number of *nyaya* panchayats in each tahsil in 1966 was as follows :

Tahsil	Number of <i>nyaya</i> panchayat			
Dharchula	..	..	..	6
Didihat	..	..	..	15
Mansyari	..	..	..	6
Pithoragarh	..	..	..	19
District total	..	..	..	46

*Panchs* in the *nyaya* panchayats are nominated from amongst the *panchs* elected to the *gaon* panchayats by the district magistrate with the help of an advisory committee on the basis of prescribed

qualifications, age, etc. The *panchs* elect from amongst themselves a *sarpanch* (who is its presiding officer) and a *sahayak sarpanch* (assistant presiding officer), both of whom have powers to record proceedings. In 1965, there were 1,050 *panchs*, 46 *sarpanchs* and an equal number of *sahayak sarpanchs*. The tenure of office of both the *panchs* and the *sarpanchs* is 5 years which can be extended for another year by the State Government. Cases are heard by benches, each consisting of 5 *panchs* and constituted for a year by the *sarpanch*.

The *nyaya* panchayats are empowered to try criminal cases under the Acts or specific sections thereof as given below :

(a) The U. P. Panchayat Raj Act, 1947

(b) Sections

140, 160, 172, 174, 179, 269, 277, 283, 285, 289, 290, 294, 323, 334, 341, 352, 357, 358, 374, 379\*, 403\*, 411\*, 426, 428, 430, 431, 447, 448, 504, 506, 509, 510 of the Indian Penal Code.

\*involving an amount up to Rs 50

(c) The Cattle-Trespass Act, 1871 (sections 24 and 26)

(d) The U. P. District Boards Primary Education Act, 1926 (subsection 1 of section 10)

(e) The Public Gambling Act, 1867 (sections 3, 4, 7 and 13)

The *nyaya* panchayats can try civil suits up to a valuation of Rs 500 and also revenue cases if the parties concerned agree in writing to such a course. These courts cannot award imprisonment but are empowered to award a fine up to a hundred rupees only. Revision applications against their decisions in civil, revenue and criminal cases lie to the *munsif*, the sub-divisional officer and the sub-divisional magistrate, respectively.

The number of cases heard and disposed of from 1960-61 to 1964-65 by the *nyaya* panchayats and their revision courts were as under :

Year	No. of cases heard		No. of cases disposed of	
	<i>Nyaya</i> panchayats	Revision courts	<i>Nyaya</i> panchayats	Revision courts
1960-61 ..	1,146	132	893	117
1961-62 ..	760	247	479	213
1962-63 ..	1,168	159	999	137
1963-64 ..	866	101	730	91
1964-65 ..	576	67	504	52



## CHAPTER XIII

### OTHER DEPARTMENTS

The government departments that are concerned with general administration, revenue administration, and law and order and justice in the district have already been dealt with in chapters X, XI and XII, respectively. The organisational set-up at the district level of the government departments for agriculture, animal husbandry, co-operatives, education, forests, industries and public works is dealt with briefly in this chapter.

#### Agriculture Department

The district comes within the jurisdiction of the assistant director of agriculture, Kumaon and Uttarakhand region, whose headquarters are at Naini Tal. In the district, the district agriculture officer looks after agricultural programmes and their execution. He is assisted by eight assistant development officers (agriculture) and eight assistant agriculture inspectors, one in each development block. The number of *kamdars* working under the assistant agriculture inspectors is 16. There are eight agriculture seed stores, one each at the block headquarters, of which an assistant agriculture inspector is in charge, who maintains the records of stocks of fertilizers and seeds and distributes it to the cultivators.

The horticulture development scheme in the district is controlled by a district horticulture officer. The other staff comprises two senior horticulture inspectors, a senior plant protection assistant, two junior plant protection assistants, five persons in charge of the horticulture mobile teams, eight supervisors, eight head gardeners, 40 gardeners, four field attendants and a porter. There are eight mobile team centres, one each at the block headquarters and two such sub-centres, one each at Punga and Madkote. The mobile teams are engaged in the work of collection of fruit plants and vegetable seeds and their distribution; collection of tools and implements from certain orchardists and their distribution to other orchardists on cash payment; maintenance of progeny orchards; treatment of fruit plants, agriculture and vegetable crops against pests and diseases; pruning of fruit plants; supervision of orchards; and giving technical guidance to orchardists.

#### Animal Husbandry Department

The district falls under the jurisdiction of the assistant director of animal husbandry, hill circle, whose headquarters are at Naini

Tal. The district live-stock officer is in charge of programmes of the development of live-stock and fisheries and is concerned with the treatment of animal diseases, control of epidemics, castration of scrub bulls, and better breeding of cattle and poultry.

### **Co-operative Department**

The district comes within the jurisdiction of the assistant registrar (co-operative societies), in charge of Kumaon region, whose headquarters are at Naini Tal. At the district level an assistant registrar (co-operative societies) is in charge of co-operative activities and exercises supervision and control over the co-operative societies in the district. He is assisted by an additional district co-operative officer and several assistant development officers (co-operative), one for each development block. There is also a co-operative inspector who is attached to the District Co-operative Bank. In addition to this, there are 33 co-operative supervisors and 13 provincial co-operative union supervisors in the district. For the efficient functioning of co-operative work at village level, 4 rural godowns have been constructed, one each at Rongkong, Meharkhola, Binchesar and Nainichoura.

### **Education Department**

The organisational set-up of the education department at the regional level consists of a deputy director of education, Kumaon and Uttarakhand region (for boys' education), and a regional inspectress of girls' schools, Bareilly region (for girls' education), their headquarters being at Naini Tal and Bareilly, respectively. At the district level, a district inspector of schools is the highest educational officer and is responsible for the supervision, control and inspection of educational institutions (for boys in particular), up to the higher secondary stage. He is assisted by a deputy inspector of schools and an assistant inspectress (of girls' schools), both of whom are in charge of education up to the junior high school stage. There are also 9 sub-deputy inspectors in the district to inspect and supervise boys' schools up to the junior high school stage, in the development blocks. Sanskrit *pathshalas* (schools) in the district are supervised by the inspector of Sanskrit Pathshalas of the Bareilly region and Urdu-medium schools by a deputy inspector of Urdu-medium schools of the Allahabad region.

### **Forest Department**

The district falls under the jurisdiction of the conservator of forest, Kumaon circle, whose headquarters are at Naini Tal. The district is the headquarters of the Pithoragarh forest division, under the charge

of a divisional forest officer who is assisted by an assistant conservator of forest. There are two range officers, one for each of the two ranges in the district. The district is also divided into eight sections, each of which is looked after by a forester and eight beats, each under the charge of a forest guard.

### Industries Department

The district falls under the northern zone of the industries department, U. P., the zonal office being situated at Bareilly. The district industries officer is in charge of industries and the industrial development of the district and provides technical guidance and assistance to the industrial units in both the private and public sectors. He is assisted by an industries inspector and five assistant development officers who look after the work concerning industries in the rural areas.

There are a number of training-cum-production centres, five of them being for wool spinning and weaving, one each at Mansyari, Sirkha, Kalika, Bin and Thal, one for embroidery and knitting at Pithoragarh, one for carpet and shawl making at Didihat, one for *namda* making at Dharchula, one for carpentry at Pithoragarh, three for tailoring, one each at Tejam, Kheta and Pithoragarh, two for hosiery, one each at Balwakot and Mansyari and one for weaving at Pithoragarh. In addition there are six *jalecharka* units, two wool utilisation centres and a service centre for repair of agricultural implements.

### Public Works Department

The district is at present the temporary headquarters of the XII border works circle of the public works department, U. P., and is under the charge of a superintending engineer. The four divisions of the circle are provincial division, Pithoragarh, border works division, Pithoragarh, border works temporary division, Askot and border works temporary division, Didihat, each being under the charge of an executive engineer. The headquarters of the provincial and the border works divisions are at Pithoragarh. The executive engineer of the provincial division is assisted by three assistant engineers and two subdivisional officers. The executive engineer of the border works division is assisted by four assistant engineers and nine overseers. The department is concerned with the maintenance and construction of roads, culverts, bridges and buildings belonging to the State government.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

The local self-governing bodies in the district are a municipal board, an Antarim Zila Parishad and 575 *gaon sabhas*. These bodies wield wide powers and responsibilities in respect of the areas under their jurisdiction.

#### MUNICIPAL BOARD

The town of Pithoragarh, before the creation of a municipal board, was administered as a town area by a committee consisting of 10 members and a chairman. The municipality came into existence on November 24, 1962, and the members and chairman of the town area committee became its members. On March 12, 1963, the board was dissolved and since then the town is administered, under the U. P. Municipalities Act, 1916, by the district magistrate who is *ex officio* administrator of the board. There is no elected body and the affairs are supervised by an officer in charge (a deputy collector) to whom the powers are delegated by the district magistrate. The municipality has an area of 28.3 hectares and a population of 5,000, according to the census of 1961.

**Finances**—The main sources of income are house tax, rent from government land managed by the municipal board, tolls, contributions, income from cattle pounds, etc. The major heads of expenditure are general administration and collection charges, public works, waterworks and conservancy. The income and expenditure figures for the last seven years have been appended in Statements I (a) and I (b) at the end of the chapter.

**Waterworks**—The waterworks is maintained by the board which employs a waterworks engineer, a meter reader and other officials for its maintenance.

#### ANTARIM ZILA PARISHAD

The Pithoragarh Antarim Zila Parishad was created on April 1, 1961, under the U. P. Antarim Zila Parishads Act, 1958, but all the duties, functions and powers of the Antarim Zila Parishad were vested in the district magistrate pending the creation of an elected board. The work of this body has been of a multifarious nature, its principal functions being the implementation of the Five-year Plan schemes,



the utilisation of funds allotted by government for this purpose in the spheres of agriculture, co-operatives, animal husbandry, education, public health and people's welfare, and the raising and expending of taxes levied by it for certain specific activities with which it is directly concerned.

**Finances**—Its main sources of income are government grants, school fees and cattle pounds. The major items of expenditure are connected with general administration, the collection of dues, education, medical and public health, and public works. Its income and expenditure had been Rs 18,85,417 and Rs 19,03,801, respectively, during 1965-66. The income and expenditure figures for the last five years have been appended in the Statements II (a) and II (b) at the end of the chapter.

**Public Health and Medical Services**—This body maintained three allopathic dispensaries. A sum of Rs 30,729 was spent by the Parishad on medical and public health during 1965-66.

**Education**—The Antarim Zila Parishad was responsible for junior and senior Basic education in the district, a deputy inspector of schools and an assistant inspectress of girls' schools being in charge of boys' and girls' education, respectively. During 1964-65, it maintained 253 junior Basic schools for boys with 26,723 pupils (including 7,488 girls) on roll, and 11 such schools for girls with 939 pupils (including 255 boys) on roll. The number of senior Basic schools for boys was 16 with 1,873 pupils (including 195 girls) on roll and that for girls was one, with 19 girls on roll. The teachers employed were 772 men and 62 women in the junior Basic schools and 90 men and 4 women in senior Basic schools, the amount spent on education being Rs 7,85,450 which included the State government contribution as well.

The Antarim Zila Parishad also managed four Kumaon Shilpkar Sabha schools during 1964-65 the affairs of which were supervised by a subdeputy inspector of schools of the area. On March 31, 1965, there were four teachers and 164 pupils (including 43 girls) in these schools, the amount spent (during 1964-65) being Rs 2,520.

**Public Works**—The Antarim Zila Parishad maintained 363.71 km. of unmetalled roads in the district. It constructed 14 bridges in 1963-64 and spent Rs 1,95,811 on public works during 1965-66.

## PANCHAYATS

Prior to 1960 there were 647 *gaon sabhas* and as many *gaon* panchayats, in the area covered by the present district of Pithoragarh, and all of them functioned under the U.P. Panchayat Raj Act, 1947. In 1961, the number of *gaon sabhas* was reduced to 575. A *gaon satha* is constituted for a village or group of villages with a minimum population of 250 persons and all the adults of the village are its members. The *gaon* panchayat, which is the executive body of the *gaon sabha*, has a *pradhan* (president) and an *up-pradhan* (vice-president), the former and the members of the *gaon* panchayat being elected by the members of the *gaon sabha* for a term of 5 years. The members elect the *up-pradhan* for a term of one year from amongst themselves. The number of members of a *gaon* panchayat is fixed between 15 and 30, depending on the size of the *gaon sabha*. The powers and duties of the *gaon* panchayats relate to the construction, repairs, cleaning and lighting of public streets; medical relief; sanitation and prevention of epidemics; up-keep and supervision of public buildings or property belonging to the *gaon sabha*; registration of births, deaths and marriages; removal of encroachments on public streets and places; regulation of places for the disposal of the dead; regulation of markets and fairs; construction of junior Basic school buildings; establishment and management of common land and grazing grounds; assistance in the development of agriculture, commerce and industry; aid in fighting fires, maintenance of records relating to cattle and population censuses; maternity and child welfare; and allotment of places for the storage of manure.

The permissive duties of the panchayats are the organisation of a village volunteer force for watch and ward and other public purposes, distribution of loans to agriculturists and aid in liquidation of their debts, development of co-operatives, establishment of improved seed and implement stores, famine relief, maintenance of public libraries, reading-rooms, play grounds, public radio sets and gramophones, and promotion of social and communal harmony and good-will.

The main sources of the finances of the panchayats are government grants, voluntary contributions and the taxes raised by them. A statement pertaining to the taxes assessed and collected by the

*gaon* panchayats of the district from 1963-64 to 1965-66 is given below :

Year	Tax assessed (in rupees)	Tax collected (in rupees)
1963-64	24,357·04	16,006·16
1964-65	27,311·11	30,215·60
1965-66	21,672·03	27,214·33

The following statement gives the achievements of the *gaon* panchayats of the district :

Works undertaken	Completed during Third Plan period
Drinking water projects (such as nullahs), etc.	281
School buildings	
Constructed	177
Repaired	31
Panchayat ghars	
Constructed	62
Repaired	13
Bridges/culverts	47
Unmetalled roads	
Constructed	666·27 km.
Repaired	268·76 km.
Metalled roads constructed	3·37 km.
Brick pavements	41·84 km.
Community orchards	39
Afforestation	36·62 ha.
Pastures	82·55 ha.

## STATEMENT I (a)

*Receipts (in Rupees), Municipal Board, Pithoragarh*

Reference Page No. 157

Year	Municipal rates and taxes	Realisations under special Acts	Revenue derived from municipal property etc., other than taxes	Grants and contributions	Miscellaneous	Other sources	Total receipts
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1960-61	56,844	..	2,553	12,319	28,014	3,577	1,03,307
1961-62	57,660	..	6,366	25,559	1,150	4,413	95,148
1962-63	55,549	..	10,434	60,160	15,000	1,211	1,42,354
1963-64	65,382	565	6,182	33,408	..	3,864	1,09,401
1964-65	53,734	202	18,852	29,703	..	1,375	1,03,866
1965-66	75,114	737	32,643	8,712	..	780	1,17,986
1966-67	46,717	625	30,368	11,600	..	3,766	93,076

## STATEMENT I (b)

*Expenditure (in Rupees), Municipal Board, Pithoragarh*

Reference Page No. 157

Year	General administration and collection charges	Public safety	Public health and sanitation	Miscellaneous	Other heads	Total expenditure
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1960-61	21,298	3,907	55,186	1,228	2,776	84,395
1961-62	20,132	3,845	17,261	305	1,747	43,290
1962-63	28,211	554	24,155	10,000	12,240	75,160
1963-64	24,192	2,718	4,799	4,468	92,189	1,28,366
1964-65	32,971	1,710	97,540	2,673	305	1,35,199
1965-66	26,534	9,412	1,03,137	4,620	6,421	1,50,124
1966-67	28,257	5,431	76,565	4,190	7,218	1,21,661



## STATEMENT II (a)

*Receipts (in Rupees), Antarim Zila Parishad, Pithoragarh*

Reference Page No. 158

Year	Government grants	Education	Medical and public health	Cattle pound	Other sources	Total receipts
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1961-62	6,08,607	21,561	33	773	35,113	6,66,087
1962-63	12,25,892	51,618	30	666	45,570	13,23,776
1963-64	12,82,759	1,36,314	5	132	29,832	14,49,042
1964-65	10,83,201	1,07,879	15	435	97,213	12,88,743
1965-66	17,32,801	60,685	18	215	91,698	18,85,417

## STATEMENT II (b)

*Expenditure (in Rupees), Antarim Zila Parishad, Pithoragarh*

Reference Page No. 158

Year	General administration and collection charges	Education	Medical and public health	Public works	Other heads	Total expenditure
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1961-62	16,639	5,28,852	33,080	48,488	5,551	6,32,610
1962-63	25,275	6,23,737	25,105	60,901	20,944	7,55,962
1963-64	28,198	12,61,142	29,054	81,520	1,56,144	15,56,058
1964-65	27,766	10,17,965	28,946	1,54,569	74,632	13,03,878
1965-66	45,254	16,16,531	30,729	1,95,811	15,476	19,03,801

## CHAPTER XV

### EDUCATION AND CULTURE

In ancient days the entire area of the district formed part of the traditional Manaskhand. The hermitage of the sage Vyas, accredited author of the *Mahabharata*, is said to have been located at Kalapani in *patti* Byans of this district. As elsewhere, the *ashramas* were centres of learning and culture in that period. Under the personal guidance of gurus, regular education began with the initiation ceremony called *upanayana samskar*. The student was free to choose his branch of specialisation from among the traditional branches of learning, such as *itihasa-purana* (legend and lore), *vyakarana* (grammar), *rasi* (mathematics), *gyotish* (astronomy and astrology), *anvikshiki* (philosophy), *dharamshastra* (law), *shastravidya* (statecraft and military science) and *Ayurveda* (the science of medicine). The Vedas (including *Mimamsa Karamkanda*) and grammar were generally studied by every student. Education was free of cost and the student was required to help the teacher in his household and farm work. The development of the character of the pupil and the acquisition by him of learning and sacred lore were the chief aims of education.

In course of time, this system of education became traditional, and such establishments where no fees were charged were called *pathshalas*. They were generally located in the vicinity of some temple or near a grove. In addition to the subjects that were taught, such as elementary Sanskrit and grammar, astrology, and mathematics, some students were also prepared for priesthood. This system of education remained unaltered during the reign of the Katyuri and Chand rajas, but suffered considerably during the Gurkha interregnum (1790—1815).

In 1823, Traill, the commissioner of Kumaon, wrote, "There are no public institutions of the nature of schools, and private tuition is almost confined to the upper classes. The teachers are commonly Brahmins who impart to their scholars the mere knowledge of reading, writing and accounts. The children of respectable Brahmins are also taught Sanskrit and are occasionally sent to Benaras to complete their studies, where they pass through the usual course of Hindu education." In 1840, Barron, in his book *Himmala*, wrote, "All the Paharis of Kumaon, however poor, could read and write". The lower class of schools, designed primarily for the education of the

masses, in most cases, consisted of an upper and a lower grade, the latter comprising village schools and the former generally termed as *tahsildaree* schools. A model school was established at the headquarters of each tahsil. In 1837, the nearest government college was located at Bareilly.

Sir Henry Ramsay, describing his educational policy wrote in 1874, "It is considered more beneficial to impart to many the useful knowledge of reading and writing sufficient for their every day use than to give to a smaller number a better education by employing qualified but more expensive teachers". By the end of the 19th century, agriculture alone could not support the hillman and he, therefore, had recourse to service through education. As regards female education, it was said that girls were too valuable to be allowed to waste their time over book learning, as there was plenty of work for them to do by way of carrying wood and grass and tilling the fields. However, the first girls' school was opened at Milam (in tahsil Mansyari) in 1867, and in 1871 there were 18 girls attending it.

By 1909, there were 39 aided and 33 State primary schools and 2 vernacular middle schools in the district. In 1911, there were 34 aided primary schools, 28 State primary schools and one vernacular middle school, and by the year 1965, there were in the district in all, one degree college (both for boys and girls), 19 higher secondary schools, 56 junior high schools and 389 junior Basic schools.

### Growth of Literacy

According to the census of 1961, the males and females in the district who were literate and educated numbered 53,605 and 7,943 respectively, the percentages of literate and educated males and females in relation to their respective total numbers, which were 1,28,292 and 1,35,287, being 41.78 and 5.87, respectively, and the proportion of males and females who were literate and educated in relation to the total population, which was 2,63,579, was 23.35 per cent. The majority among both the sexes was of those who had become literate without having attained any recognised educational standard, the number of literates among males being 32,803 and that among females 5,781.

Given below is a statement indicating the number of illiterate, literate and educated persons (having various educational standards) as revealed by the 1961 census :

Educational standard	Total	Males	Females
Rural :			
Total population	2,63,579	1,28,292	1,35,287
Illiterate	2,02,031	74,687	1,27,344
Literate (without educational level)	38,584	32,803	5,781
Primary or Junior Basic	20,265	18,274	1,991
Matriculation and above	2,699	2,528	171

## GENERAL EDUCATION

General education now includes education from the pre-junior basic or nursery stage to the university stage. In 1964-65, the number of pre-junior basic or nursery schools in the district was one, that of junior basic schools 438 (those for boys being 389 and for girls 49) and that of senior basic schools 56 (of which 8 were for girls), there being also 4 Kumaon Shilpkar Sabha Schools imparting instruction up to the junior basic stage. There were, in 1965-66, in the district 15 higher secondary schools for boys and four for girls of which six for boys and one for girls were intermediate colleges, the rest being high schools. Of these, 11 for boys, one each at Askot, Berinag, Dharchula, Didihat, Gangolihat, Kanalicinna, Mansyari, Nachani (Mansyari), Pangu, Pipalkote and Pithoragarh and three for girls, one each at Berinag, Namjala (Mansyari) and Pithoragarh, are maintained by the State Government, and the rest for boys, one each at Bankote and Dewal Thal and two at Pithoragarh, and one for girls at Bhatkote (Pithoragarh), by private bodies. The only degree college in the district started functioning with effect from July, 1963, and is run by the State Government. The statement below gives the enrolment for each type of institution on different dates, indicated against each :

Institution	Number	Enrolment	As on (date)
1	2	3	4
<b>For Boys—</b>			
Pre-junior Basic or Nursery	1	57 (including 21 girls)	March 31, 1965
Junior Basic	389	35,613 (including 10,468 girls)	March 31, 1965
Senior Basic (or Junior High School)	48	9,651 (including 610 girls)	March 31, 1965
Higher Secondary (up to class X)	9	2,534	November 30, 1965
Higher Secondary (up to class XII)	6	3,092	November 30, 1965
Degree College	1	64 (including 13 girls)	March 31, 1965

[ Continued



1	2	3	4
<b>For Girls---</b>			
Junior Basic	49	3,811 (including 923 boys)	March 31, 1965
Senior Basic (or Junior High School)	8	565 (including 62 girls and 113 boys of junior Basic stage)	March 31, 1965
Higher Secondary (up to class X)	3	445	November 30, 1965
Higher Secondary (up to class XII)	1	354	November 30, 1965

The figures regarding general education for the last six years have been appended at the end of the Chapter I in Statement I.

### Pre-junior Basic Stage

Pre-junior Basic Education, which is imparted to children up to six years of age, is of recent growth in the district, the Govind Ballabh Pant Nursery School, Pithoragarh, founded by Ganga Ram Punetha in July, 1961, being the only recognised institution of this type. As on March 31, 1965, it had a staff of two women teachers and an enrolment of 57 pupils (including 21 girls), and the expenditure incurred during 1964-65 amounted to Rs 6,608, the Assistant Inspectress of Girls' Schools being in charge of its inspection.

### Junior and Senior Basic Stage

The Wardha Scheme of Education was adopted by the State Government with certain modifications including the introduction of an eight-year course of studies comprising the junior basic stage from classes I to V and the senior basic stage from classes VI to VIII, was already in operation in the tahsil of Pithoragarh in February 1960, when it became the district of Pithoragarh.

This system as it obtains in the district owes its origin to Mahatma Gandhi according to whom education meant 'an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit'. The fundamentals of this form of education are that free and compulsory education for eight years be provided by the State, the mother-tongue be the medium of instruction, the process of education should centre

round some useful handieraft, enabling the child to produce something from the moment his training is begun, and every school should be self-supporting.

The Antarim Zila Parishad is responsible for junior and senior basic education in the district, the Deputy Inspector of Schools and the Assistant Inspectress of Girls' Schools being in charge of boys' and girls' education respectively. In 1964-65, the Antarim Zila Parishad maintained 253 junior basic schools for boys with 26,723 pupils (including 7,488 girls) on roll and 11 such schools for girls with 939 pupils (including 255 boys) on roll, the number of State-managed boys junior basic schools being 132 with 8,661 pupils (including 2,915 girls) on roll, and that for girls being 37 with 2,832 pupils (including 646 boys) on roll. The number of State-managed senior basic schools for boys was 16, with 1,317 pupils (including 122 girls) on roll and that for girls six, with 257 girls on roll. The number of senior basic schools for boys managed by the Antarim Zila Parishad being also 16, with 1,873 pupils (including 195 girls) on roll and that for girls one, with 19 girls on roll. There were four privately managed boys' junior basic schools, with 229 pupils (including 65 girls) on roll and one such school for girls with 440 pupils (including 22 boys) on roll. There were 16 privately managed boys' senior basic schools with 6,461 pupils (including 293 girls) on roll and one such school for girls with 298 girls (including 62 girls and 113 boys of junior Basic stage) on roll, all of which were recognised and received aid under the Uttarakhand Development Scheme. The Antarim Zila Parishad employed 772 men and 62 women teachers in the junior Basic schools and 90 men and four women teachers in the senior Basic schools, the amount spent by it on education being Rs 7,85,450, which included the State Government's contribution as well. The number of male teachers in the State-managed senior and junior Basic schools was 78 and 270 respectively, women teachers being 25 in senior and 78 in junior Basic schools. The number of male teachers in the privately managed senior and junior Basic schools was 69 and four respectively, female teachers being 12 in senior and 4 in junior Basic schools.

The Antarim Zila Parishad also managed four Kumaon Shilpkar Sabha schools during 1964-65. The schools were supervised by a sub-deputy inspector of schools of the area. As on March 31, 1965, there was a staff of four teachers and an enrolment of 164 pupils (including 43 girls), the amount expended on them (during 1964-65) being Rs 2,520.

## Re-orientation Scheme

The aims of this scheme are to train students in agriculture, to create in them a feeling for the dignity of labour and to augment the finances of the institution by the sale of the agricultural produce raised by the pupils. It has already been in operation in the tahsil of Pithoragarh since February, 1960, when it became a district, and during 1965-66 it was in force in 20 institutions (agriculture being a compulsory subject) of which eight were higher secondary and 12 senior Basic schools. The land attached to these institutions for teaching agriculture was 53.10 hectares.

## Secondary Education

Secondary education, leads up from the junior Basic (or primary) stage to the collegiate. The old Zila schools imparting secondary education were government schools leading up to the School Leaving Certificate examination but with the establishment of the board of high school and intermediate education, U. P., in 1921, the high schools examination began to be held at the stage of class X and the intermediate examination at the stage of class XII. Formerly a high school started with class III, but with the reorganisation of education in 1948, classes III to V were transferred of the junior Basic schools and the high schools, starting with class VI, were redesignated higher secondary schools. Thus secondary education now covers education beyond the junior Basic stage up to class XII.

In 1965-66, there were in the district, 15 institutions for boys with 5,626 pupils on roll, 6 (with 3,092 on roll) providing education up to the intermediate standard and the rest (with 2,534 on roll) up to class X. The girls' institutions numbered 4, with 799 girls on roll, one being an intermediate college (with 354 pupils on roll) and the rest high schools, with 445 pupils on roll. Of these four schools for boys, one each at Bankote and Dewal Thal and 2 at Pithoragarh and one for girls at Bhatkote are managed by private agencies which receive financial aid from the State Government. The remaining institution (11 for boys and 3 for girls) are being maintained by the government. The statement below gives relevant particulars about these institutions :

Institution and location	Year of estab- lishment	Founder	Status and year of upgrading	No. of pupils (1965-66)	No. of teachers (1965-66)	Income in rupees (1964-65)	Expen- diture in rupees (1964-65)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Mission Girls' Higher Secondary School, Bhaktote (Pithoragarh)	1880	Methodist Mis- sion North India Conference	Started as primary school, high school in 1965	314	12	—	—
Mission Intermediate College, Pithoragarh	1895	Ditto	Started as junior high school, high school in 1948, interme- diate college in 1961	663	22	70,601	69,084
Government Intermediate College, Pithoragarh	1930	Public and Military Per- sonnel	Started as junior high school, high school in 1931, interme- diate college in 1951	567	34 <sup>2</sup>	1,47,829	1,47,279
Higher Secondary School, Dewal Thal	1942	Private body	Started as junior high school high school in 1961	306	15	42,222	33,680
Government Intermediate Col- lege, Kanalicinema	1945	Ditto	Started as junior high school, in 1963, intermediate college in 1965	488	25	86,845	86,053
Government Intermediate Col- lege, Askot	1946	Narayan Swami	Started as junior high school, high school in 1949, interme- diate college in 1953	379	20	1,32,580	1,11,671
Government Girls' Intermediate College, Pithoragarh	1946	State Government	Started as junior high school, high school in 1950, interme- diate college in 1961	354	26	1,32,873	1,33,029
Government Higher Secondary School, Pangu	1946	Private body	Started as junior high school, high school in 1956	175	15	1,06,147	1,05,239



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sri Sarswati Deb Singh Higher Secondary School, Pithoragarh	1947	Dan Singh Bist	Started as high school	387	17	51,373	50,028
Government Intermediate College, Berinag	1948	Private body	Started as high school, intermediate college in 1962	565	28	96,728	95,003
Government Higher Secondary School, Gangolihat	1948	Ditto	Started as junior high school, high school in 1949	406	16	55,236	54,845
Government Higher Secondary School, Dharchula	1949	Prem Ballabh Kherkwal	Started as junior high school, high school in 1962	249	17	96,736	95,739
Janta Higher Secondary School, Bankote	1952	Private body	Started as junior high school, high school in 1959	391	13	41,428	36,114
Government Intermediate College, Mansyari	1954	State Government	Started as high school, intermediate college in 1960	430	31	1,01,634	2,00,696
Government Girls' Higher Secondary School, Namjala, (Mansyari)	1960	Ditto	Started as junior high school, higher secondary school in 1965	51	5	Government funds	Not known
Government Higher Secondary School, Pipalkote	1961	Private body	Started as high school	421	16	36,701	32,828
Government Girls' Higher Secondary School, Bernag	1962	State Government	Started as junior high school, high school in 1965	80	7	Government funds	Not known
Government Higher Secondary School, Nachani (Mansyari)	1964	Ditto	Started as high school	80	9	30,339	28,317
Government Higher Secondary School, Didihat	1964	Ditto	Ditto	128	9	33,022	32,081

### EDUCATION OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES

Particular attention was first directed to the education of the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes in 1937-38 and now greater incentives are being provided for the spread of education among these groups. The number of pupils (figures for the Scheduled Castes being for 1964-65 and those for Other Backward Classes for 1963-64) in these groups is being given below :

School	Scheduled Castes		Other Backward Classes		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Junior Basic	4,868	1,349	1,049	441	7,707
Senior Basic	480	30	139	68	717
Higher secondary (up to class X)	240	4	151	22	417
Higher secondary (up to class XII)	161	10	292	8	471
Normal (H. T. C.)	12	—	3	—	15

Boys of these communities are exempted from payment of fees up to class VI and girls up to class X, the wards of those whose monthly income is below Rs 200 also being exempt from payment of fees at the higher stages of education. The facilities made available are, relaxation of the time and upper age limits for admission to certain educational institutions, giving of free tuition, stipends, scholarships and financial assistance for the purchase of books and stationery and the providing of free hostel facilities. The number of pupils, belonging to these groups, receiving such facilities at various educational stages, during 1964-65 in case of the Scheduled Castes, and 1963-64 in case of Other Backward Classes, was as follows :

School	Scheduled Castes		Other Backward Classes		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Junior Basic	112	24	144	33	313
Senior Basic	59	18	42	23	142
Higher secondary (up to classes X and XII)	197	7	224	27	455
Normal (H. T. C.)	12	—	3	—	15

Free accommodation is provided at village Bajali Dolal (in taluk Pithoragarh) for 20 students of these groups.

## Higher Education

The Government Degree College, Pithoragarh, founded by the State Government in July, 1963, is the only institution in the district which imparts higher education. It is a co-educational institution and prepares students for the B. A. degree of the Agra University. The strength of students, during 1965-66, was 87 (including 24 girls). There were in all 19 teachers.

## PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

### Teachers' Training

Two government normal schools, for boys at Didihat (founded in 1961) and another for girls at Pithoragarh (started in July, 1965, as a wing of the Government Girls' Intermediate College) prepare candidates for the Hindustani Teacher's Certificate examination, the duration of the training being two years. The trainees in them numbered 94 and 20 respectively during 1965-66, the strength of teachers being 11 men and 3 women respectively.

### Mali Training

Introduced in the district in 1960-61, this scheme seeks to prepare those interested in horticulture, in the art of pruning, grafting, plant protection measures, use of insecticides, etc. Batches of 20 to 30 are trained at a time, the duration of training being 3 months and the amount of stipend received by each trainee from the government funds being Rs 40. Those trained up to 1965-66, at various government nurseries, multipurpose horticulture farms and progeny orchards, numbered 342, and the amount expended was Rs 30,959, the government grant received in respect of the scheme since its inception amounting to Rs 36,200 and the yearwise break-up being as follows :

Year				Number trained	Expenditure (in rupees)	Government grant (in rupees)
1960-61	..	..	..	120	8,586	9,200
1961-62	..	..	..	49	4,584	7,000
1962-63	..	..	..	48	4,270	5,000
1963-64	..	..	..	44	4,741	5,000
1964-65	..	..	..	44	5,006	5,000
1965-66	..	..	..	37	3,772	5,000

### Vocational Training

There are in the district 16 training-cum-production centres, run by the industries department, which impart vocational training in various handicrafts such as carpentry, smithery, spinning and weaving

of wool, making of hosiery, tailoring, knitting, crochet work, embroidery, and carpet and shawl making, the duration of training, which is stipendary, being one year, on the completion of which successful trainees are awarded certificates by the department of industries.

To encourage technical education amongst the inhabitants of the district, stipends and scholarships are also awarded to suitable local students to enable them to join industrial training institutes, polytechnics and other technical institutions in other hill districts and the plains, Rs 82,000 and Rs 57,045 being the sums expended by government during 1964-65 and 1965-66, respectively, under this scheme in this and Chamoli and Uttarkashi districts.

#### ORIENTAL EDUCATION

##### Sanskrit

There were in the district (during 1965-66) only three Sanskrit *pathshalas*, one each at Kanalichinna, Pithoragarh and Gangolihat, which imparted education in Sanskrit literature, *vyakarana* (grammar), *ganita* (mathematics), *gyotish* (astronomy and astrology), *darshan* (philosophy), etc. The statement below gives relevant particulars about these institutions, all being affiliated to the Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Varanasi, and recognised by the State Government.

Name and location	Year of establishment	Founder	Courses of study	No. of pupils (1965-66)	No. of teachers (1965-66)	Income in rupees (1964-65)	Expenditure in rupees (1964-65)
Gauri Shanker Sanskrit Vidyalaya	1955	Laxmi Datt Pant	From Praveshika to Purva Madhyama	20	3	15,514	13,128
Sri Madan Mohan Malviya Sanskrit Vidyalaya, Pithoragarh	1962	Private body	Ditto	56	3	2,200	2,200
Sri Madan Mohan Sanskrit Pathshala, Gangolihat	1962	Ditto	Ditto	39	1	972	972

#### ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education classes are run by the development blocks under the supervision of block development officers, the duration of the course being six months. Instruction is imparted by part-time teachers and adult leaders and the examinations are conducted by the inspecting staff of the government. Adult centres for women are run by women village level workers (Gram Lakshmis), training being



given in local crafts, handicrafts, nursing and community living. The adult education classes organised in the district during 1964-65 numbered 101, adults made literate and Gram Sahayak trained, numbering 1,954 and 2,394 respectively, and the number of women trained in handicrafts being 1,237.

#### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education is given to boys and girls under the district Bharat Scouts and Guides Association in almost all types of higher secondary schools and most of the junior and senior Basic schools of the district.

#### FINE ARTS AND MUSIC

The district is very rich in various types of folk-songs and folk-dances. Significant folk-songs are the Neoli, Chira, Chaiti, Hurkiyabol, Baira, Bhagnola, Jagar and Ghaneli. The Neoli is very popular in the eastern part of the district. It is a duet between lovers but the theme of the song is mainly ethical and philosophical. It is famous for its long pathetic tones. The Chira songs are the ceremonial songs of *patti Johar* and are sung by the women folk during the marriage ceremony and other auspicious occasions. The Chaitis (also known as the Bhaitoli or the Rituraina) are related with a local custom of giving presents to married sisters during the month of Chaitra. The Hurkiyabol songs are connected with the cultivation of paddy and are sung in open fields during the day time to inspire the labourers in their tedious work. The Baira songs are just like poetical debates which are composed on the spot on any current topic or on local events. The participants entertain the public for hours together. The Bhagnolas are mainly romantic songs. The main line of the song is uttered by the chief singer and is then elaborated upon by his followers. It is always sung in a standing posture. The Jagar and the Ghaneli songs contain long illustrative pieces from the *Mahabharata* or the Puranas, or narrate the deeds of local heroes now deified. These songs have a ritualistic importance and are usually sung in the long winter nights. They are also sung when somebody in the household is supposed to be under the influence of some evil spirit. The Jagars contain episodes of village gods and godlings, like Gananath, Bholanath, Bhagwati, Narsing and Churmalla, and in the Ghaneli the gods from the sacred pantheon are praised. Ramolas and Malushahis are mainly folk ballads; the former describe the episodes of the famous Ramola brothers and the latter narrate the heroine Rajula's wanderings.

Prominent folk-dances of the district are Jhora, Chanchari, Chapeli, Bhado, Devtali, Jhumaila, Chaufula, Dhol and the Hurka. The

Jhora, Chanchari, Chapeli and Devtali are more popular folk-dances and are accompanied by songs. The Jhora is the most popular dance and may be performed by any number of people during the day or the night. It is associated with the coming of the spring season. The participants—men, women or both, hold each other by the arms and sang together bending forward and backward slowly in their movements. The main singer sings and dances inside the circle followed by others. It is a community dance. Sometimes the dancers stand on each other's shoulders when it is called Domanjala-Jhora. In the Chanchari dance the movements are slower than in the Jhora and the dance-circle is often divided into semi-circles. It is mostly seen during the fairs and festivals. The Chapeli is the dance of young couples who hold mirrors and kerchiefs in their hands. The main feature of the dance is its swift rhythm. The dancers do not sing, but the song sung by the Hurka players standing near-by. The only significant feature of the Devtali dance is that the gods are themselves supposed to participate in it. The Bhado dance depicts heroic narratives of local importance. The Cholia is a pure folk-dance, with no singing at all. The dancers present the warring scenes of Rajput heroes, with swords and shields in their hands. The swift steps are a peculiar feature of this dance. A similar folk-dance is the Kyunki in which women participate with small swords and mirrors in their hands. Both these dances are performed mainly at the time of departure of a marriage party. The Dhol dance is performed during some festive occasion, in front of the temples of gods and goddesses. The skill of the dancers in swinging the *dhol*s in different ways is the main attraction. The Hurka dances, accompanied by flutes, are performed in fairs by the dancers who show their traditional skill in the dance. Its main feature is the rising tempo which becomes faster towards the end. The Jhumaila and Chaufula are community dances which may be seen in the western part of the district and are mainly performed during the spring season. Men and women dancers stand opposite to each other and the people of all castes may participate in the dance. No instrument is used, the rhythm being given by clappings.

The other folk-dances, occasionally seen in the district, are the Dhurung, Chola, Syang and Dandiyala. The Dhurung is a death ceremony and a dance as well. In this community dance, men and women move in a circle while singing songs. Sometimes the dancers use long turbans. Songs are like hymns, sung in a very mild tone, and are connected with the departure of the dead. The Chola is another dance of the northern *patti* in which men and women dance

in separate rows, playing with instruments like the *nagara*, *damua* and *jhanj*. It is a dance without song, performed mainly during a marriage ceremony. The Syang is another dance in which the participants sit together while singing, the presentation of different poses being the main feature. The Dandiyala is another dance with song performed on happy occasions. It resembles the Garba dance of Gujarat. The dancers play with small sticks while dancing, accompanied by alluring songs. The Pari dance is performed in memory of the fairies, supposed to dwell on the peaks of the Himalayan mountains.

The Pandava Yatra and the Heel Yatra are the main folk operas of the district. The former is usually performed during the Dasahra festival, and is based on the *Mahabharata*, the actual dance being preceded by a ritualistic ceremony. The participants of the Heel Yatra wore masks which are made locally. It has interesting costumes and is connected with the social life of the villagers.

The folk-songs and folk-dances are accompanied by various musical instruments. Some of them are the *bausuli*, *murli*, *binai*, *turi*, *bhokari*, *hurka*, *dhol*, *nagara*, *damua*, *jhanj* and *thali*. The *hurka* and the flute are the main instruments. The musical instruments of modern times such as the *dholak*, *kartal*, *chintas*, *majira* and harmonium, are also becoming popular, but to keep the sanctity of festive occasions, the traditional musical instruments are preferred.

The costume of the folk dancers is worth noticing. It consists of a long *chola*, a belt around the waist, narrow piped white pyjamas and a big turban on the head. Turbans are sometimes replaced by caps. Faces of the dancers are decorated with sandal wood paste and red vermilion. They also wear ear-rings.

Various fairs and festivals of the district have played a major role in preserving the art and technique of folk-songs and folk-dances. The women folk mix freely in most of these dances, which is a specific feature of the social life in the hills.

#### LIBRARIES AND READING-ROOMS

There were in the district (during 1965-66) nine rural libraries and reading-rooms (run by the education expansion department under the education and social education programme) and a district library at Pithoragarh, founded in 1963-64, and run by government. As on June 30, 1966, the last named had 3,400 books and subscribed for a number of newspapers and magazines, the number of borrowers being 190 and that of daily visitors about 30.

## STATEMENT I

*Education*

Reference Page No. 166

Year	Junior Basic education				Senior Basic education				Higher secondary				Higher education			
	Schools		Students		Schools		Students		Schools		Students		College		Students	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Men	Women
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
1960-61	286	14	18,120	3,929	38	3	2,931	297	9	1	2,218	297	—	—	—	
1961-62	296	18	19,322	4,778	39	4	3,092	491	11	1	2,915	338	—	—	—	
1962-63	335	30	23,375	6,472	40	6	3,489	466	12	1	3,355	441	—	—	—	
1963-64	373	40	25,612	11,403	47	8	3,765	601	13	1	4,126	534	1	27	6	
1964-65	389	49	26,063	13,346	48	8	4,541	886	15	1	4,677	593	1	51	13	
1965-66	403	64	26,511	14,582	49	6	5,091	788	15	4	5,442	983	1	63	24	



## CHAPTER XVI

### MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

#### MEDICAL FACILITIES IN EARLY TIMES

Ayurveda was the system of medicine practised in the area now covered by the district of Pithoragarh, tahsils Mansyari and Dharchula were rich in medicinal herbs which the *vaid*s (physicians) collected from contractors moving from place to place with their chests and treating patients. They received a share in the crop at the time of harvest and also accepted gifts from rich people. The surgery of ancient Indian doctors appears to have been bold and skilful. They performed amputations and a number of difficult operations and were expert in midwifery. Few people took to this profession in the mediaeval period, their place being taken by village doctors who were not so adept. Sulphur was recommended as a panacea for all ills. It was locally available as an impure sulphate of alumina. These pseudo-doctors took advantage of the prejudices of the people who believed that evil spirits and demoniacal forces were responsible for bringing about the state of sickness by contaminating the air or food. Such a physician was supposed to be endowed with a supernatural gift of healing by the chanting of verses, indulging in sacrificial rites or advocating the wearing of amulets or charms. Some of these practices are still in vogue in the district.

The Unani system of medicine did not spread in this region and Ayurvedic remedies continued to be used to cure illness. The springs at Kalapani are said to possess healing properties and persons suffering from skin diseases flocked to them. In the second half of the nineteenth century, notable steps to provide medical facilities to the residents of the area were taken by religious missions from abroad. The American Methodist Episcopal Mission established dispensaries under qualified medical missionaries. The Mission to Lepers, London (now called the Leprosy Mission), established a home and hospital for lepers at Chandag in 1886. Arrangements were also made in Chaudans, Dharchula and other places to treat lepers, and a clinic was established at Jhulaghat in 1953. About the beginning of the twentieth century the Almora district board took keen

interest in this regard and hospitals and dispensaries were opened and given grants to meet their expenses, which they supplemented by aid from the *sadabart*<sup>1</sup> fund. Medicines were dispensed free and a limited number of patients were also provided free board and lodging. There has been a notable increase in the medical and health facilities in the district since 1960. There are four hospitals, 14 allopathic dispensaries (State) and 11 private allopathic dispensaries, in the district. In addition to these, there are four primary health centres, 16 State Ayurvedic dispensaries, 33 private Ayurvedic dispensaries and four private homoeopathic dispensaries.

Ayurveda, which was greatly developed in ancient times, has been revived again. The people of the district are being trained in the techniques of collecting, drying, grading, storing and marketing of herbs. The herbs are analysed and their medicinal contents ascertained, for which intensive work is being carried out in an area of 3.23 hectares at Sirkha farm (Dharchula block) and at Balanti and Quanti (Mansyari block).

#### VITAL STATISTICS

Since the district came into existence in 1960, vital statistics for the period preceding 1960 are not available. It is therefore too early to indicate any trend in the statistics. However the following facts are clear. The death-rate is usually lower than the birth-rate. Calculated per thousand of the population the birth and death-rates were highest during the years 1965 and 1961, being 22.80 and 9.45, respectively. The birth-rate has tended to increase while the death-rate has decreased, and infant mortality has shown a marked decline in 1965 as compared to 1960. The following statement gives the birth, death and infant mortality rates from 1961 to 1965 :

Year	Rate per thousand of population		Rate per thousand of births
	Births	Deaths	Infant mortality
1961	19.66	9.45	71.10
1962	20.38	8.30	70.20
1963	20.33	9.10	54.10
1964	21.49	8.63	73.50
1965	22.80	8.70	34.92

1. It was an assignment of land revenue for charitable purposes

## DISEASES

**Common Diseases**

The common diseases which cause death in the district are fever, respiratory diseases, dysentery and diarrhoea, smallpox, leprosy and venereal diseases. Fever claimed the largest number of lives, followed by respiratory diseases, dysentery and diarrhoea. Death due to other diseases was almost negligible being less than one person per thousand.

**Fever**—The term 'fever' has wide connotations and not only includes such diseases as malaria and typhoid, but covers a number of diseases in which fever is a symptom rather than a cause. As many as 1,385 persons died of fever in 1962, with a rate of 5.20 per thousand. The following statement gives the number of deaths and the rate per thousand in the district from 1961 to 1965 :

Year	No. of deaths	Rate per thousand
1961	1,259	4.77
1962	1,385	5.20
1963	1,171	4.35
1964	1,055	3.90
1965	1,107	4.00

**Respiratory Diseases**—Such diseases do not cause immediate death but they lead to temporary or permanent infirmities and in some cases also cause early death. The worst affected year was 1965, when 520 persons died of respiratory diseases. The following statement gives the number of deaths and the rate per thousand in the district caused by respiratory diseases :

Year	No. of deaths	Rate per thousand
1961	469	1.70
1962	239	0.99
1963	475	1.76
1964	409	1.41
1965	520	1.83

**Dysentery and Diarrhoea**—These diseases occur in the form of bowel complaints and generally no serious note is taken of them. In 1964, as many as 506 persons died due to dysentery and diarrhoea. Much of the incidence may be attributed to insanitary conditions.

With an improvement in environmental conditions and the enforcement of sanitary measures, the incidence of these diseases is likely to be reduced. The following statement gives the number of deaths and the rate per thousand due to these diseases in the district :

Year	Number of deaths	Rate Per thousand
1961	324	1.20
1962	430	1.71
1963	476	1.77
1964	506	1.85
1965	375	1.35

**Other Diseases**—Leprosy, goitre and venereal diseases are among the other diseases which claim lives in the district. As many as 233 persons suffered from goitre, and 220 from leprosy in 1966. Various preventive and curative measures are being taken to prevent and eradicate these diseases. Leprosy is common in parts of the district adjoining Nepal and many lepers come to this region from Doti in west Nepal.

Lepers are treated at the Chandag Leprosy Home and Hospital, Pithoragarh, the clinic at Jhulaghat and the leprosy unit, Dharchula. The patients are given preliminary treatment and advanced cases are sent to the Almora Hospital and the Home for reconstructive surgery. The number of lepers (outdoor and indoor patients) treated in the district in 1965 is given below :

Institutions	Indoor	Outdoor
Chandag Leprosy Home and Hospital, Pithoragarh	120	308
Jhulaghat clinic	—	67
Leprosy unit, Dharchula	—	386

### Epidemics

The district is comparatively free from epidemics. Since its creation in 1960, there has been no death from plague and only one person died of cholera in 1961. Cholera used to spread like wild fire and many deaths were caused in 1893, 1903, 1907 and 1908 in these parts. The infection was imported from the plains. Corpses were left to decay near the streams which carried the infection to the villages in the lower regions. *Mahamari* or hill plague took an epidemic form several times before 1876, although isolated outbreaks were reported in the first quarter of this century as well.



**Smallpox**—This region had been free from smallpox in the past but the disease took an epidemic form in 1907 and again in 1908. Vaccination was introduced as an intensive measure and became popular. This naturally limited the spreading of the infection. The following statement gives the number of deaths and the rate per thousand since 1961 :

Year	No. of deaths	Rate (of deaths) per thousand
1961	14	0.06
1962	—	—
1963	3	0.02
1964	—	—
1965	3	0.01

Effective curative and preventive measures such as the implementation of vaccination and inoculation schemes, improvement of environmental sanitation and provision of better medical facilities in the urban and rural areas have been adopted and the district has remained free from epidemics since its formation.

#### MEDICAL ORGANISATION

The medical and public health departments in the State were amalgamated in 1948 and a directorate of medical and health services was created which controlled the allopathic, the Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine. In July, 1961, a separate directorate was established at Lucknow for the effective supervision of the Ayurvedic and Unani systems. The State Ayurvedic dispensaries in the district are controlled and their expenditure borne by this directorate but the local administrative control is in the hands of the district medical officer of health.

The civil surgeon is the head of the medical organisation in the district and is in over-all charge of the State hospitals and allopathic dispensaries, except those converted into primary health centres. The primary health and the maternity centres are under the charge of the district medical officer of health.

The planning department also undertakes public health improvement in the district through various activities. The sanitary inspectors look after the environmental sanitation work in each development block, supervise the work of epidemic control and impart health

education to the villager. The following statement gives particulars of public health activities in the Third Five-year Plan period :

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No. of washing and bathing platforms constructed	958
No. of old and insanitary wells improved	754
No. of new wells constructed	204
No. of sanitary latrines constructed	244
No. of smokeless ovens constructed	22

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### Hospitals

There are 3 State hospitals situated at Pithoragarh. The State dispensary was converted into the Badri Dutt Pande Hospital, Pithoragarh, in 1960.

The Har Gobind Pant Mahila Chikitsalaya, Pithoragarh, was established in 1960.

The T. B. Hospital, Pithoragarh, was established in 1960.

The Leprosy Mission, London (formerly known as the Mission to Lepers), established the Chandag Leprosy Home and Hospital, Pithoragarh, in 1886. It has grown into a big institution gradually. Some of the surgical cases are referred to the Almora Leprosy Home and Hospital for reconstructive surgery of the limbs.

### Dispensaries

**Allopathic**—There are 14 allopathic dispensaries in the district, all of which are run by the State Government, and are under the charge of the civil surgeon, Pithoragarh.

In addition, there are several dispensaries, manned and owned by private citizens, some being located in tahsil Pithoragarh. Three in tahsil Didihat and one in tahsil Dharchula. The Leprosy Mission, London, established a clinic for leprosy patients at Jhulaghat in 1953. The clinic treated 63 males and 4 females in 1966.

**Ayurvedic**—The State Government has opened 16 State Ayurvedic dispensaries in the district.

There are 33 private Ayurvedic dispensaries in the district.

### Maternity and Child Welfare

The maternity and child welfare centres were established in 1958 to reduce the high rate of mortality of women and children during the ante-natal, natal and post-natal periods. These centres are

usually staffed by a midwife, a *dai* and a health visitor. The trained staff of these centres renders aid and advice to the people at their residences. The following statement gives the location of the maternity and child health centres in the district :

Maternity and child health centres					Year of opening
Dharchula	..	..	..	..	1958-59
Sosa	..	..	..	..	1958-59
Belwakot	..	..	..	..	1962-63
Khola	..	..	..	..	1962-63
Dar	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Simkhola	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Mansyari	..	..	..	..	1962-63
Bansagar	..	..	..	..	1962-63
Tej	..	..	..	..	1962-63
Madkote	..	..	..	..	1962-63
Qiti	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Digtarh	..	..	..	..	1958-59
Bhatar	..	..	..	..	1958-59
Chaubati	..	..	..	..	1958-59
Dunakot	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Baraloo	..	..	..	..	1960-61
Munkot	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Barabe	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Sakun	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Lakun	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Lamakheth	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Sethigaon	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Pithoragarh	..	..	..	..	1958-59
Gurna	..	..	..	..	1962-63
Jakh (Basto)	..	..	..	..	1962-63
Nakot	..	..	..	..	1962-63
Wadda	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Askot	..	..	..	..	1960-61
Kanalichinna	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Pipli	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Algarh	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Dawal Thal	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Gangolihat	..	..	..	..	1962-63
Khimanda	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Bankot	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Ganaigangoli	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Boyal	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Thal	..	..	..	..	1960-61
Berinag	..	..	..	..	1962-63
Aurthal	..	..	..	..	1962-63
Bhubaneshwar	..	..	..	..	1963-64
Gartir	..	..	..	..	1963-64

These maternity and child health centres conducted 1,923, 1,683 and 1,724 cases successfully in 1963, 1964 and 1965 respectively.

A scheme to train *dais* at the maternity and child health centres was launched in 1958. Training is imparted at Dharchula, Gangoli-hat, Pithoragarh, Didihat, Thal, Askot and Mansyari for a period of 6 months and each trainee receives a stipend of Rs 35 per month. Each centre is equipped to train two to four trainees and no specific qualifications have been laid down for entrants. In the three years ending 1965, as many as 55 *dais* completed their training successfully.

### Prevention of Food Adulteration

The district medical officer of health is the licensing authority for food establishments in the district. The following statement gives relevant details about the various measures taken by his staff to prevent food adulteration :

Year	No. of samples collected	No. of cases in which prosecution launched	No. of cases in which conviction obtained
1963	140	60	55
1964	105	36	24
1965	197	29	13

### Vaccination

The district medical officer of health is in charge of vaccination work in the district and is assisted by vaccination and sanitary inspectors, epidemic assistants, nursing assistants and health visitors join the campaign during epidemics. The national smallpox eradication programme was launched in the district in July 1963 and since then compulsory vaccination has been introduced in the rural areas. The following statement gives some of the facts :

Year	No. of primary vaccinations		No. of revaccinations		Total no. of persons vaccinated
	Successful	Unsuccessful	Successful	Unsuccessful	
1961	3,339	44	12,072	5,650	21,114
1962	7,953	235	11,001	6,337	25,526
1963	50,146	221	1,12,145	315	1,62,827
1964	4,757	938	54,169	39,943	68,907
1965	5,340	289	3,348	1,559	10,526



### Malaria Control Programme

The National Malaria Control Programme was started in 1961-62 in the district. D. D. T. was sprayed twice a year (May to July 15 ; and July 16 to September 30), with a dosage of 100 mg. per 0.092 sq. metres per round. The following statement gives the various measures taken under the programme :

Year	No. of villages sprayed	No. of houses sprayed	Population protected
1964-65	875	20,122	98,012
1965-66	740	20,216	88,660

### Family Planning

There are eight family planning centres in the district, each being manned by a social worker and other staff. Vasectomy operations are carried out at the State hospitals and primary health centres. These centres publicise family planning and provide technical knowledge and contraceptives.

### Eye Relief Camps

The Sitapur Eye Hospital established a branch at Pithoragarh on May 1, 1963. According to a survey of the eye diseases prevailing in the district, the incidence of conjunctivitis, trachoma and xerophthalmia is rated as very high. Treatment was provided to 5,387 outdoor and 266 indoor patients, and 252 patients were operated on in 1966. The hospital is manned by two medical officers, one compounder and six others.

The hospital organises camps in different development blocks of the district. In these camps 4,346 outdoor and 284 indoor patients were treated, and 357 eye operations were performed in 1966.

### District Branch of Indian Red Cross Society

This was established at Pithoragarh in 1962 and is affiliated to the U. P. State Branch of the Indian Red Cross Society, Lucknow. The deputy commissioner, Pithoragarh, is its president and the district medical officer of health is its honorary secretary. The society provides relief to the people in times of natural calamities.

### Nutrition

The people of the district are generally vegetarian. They consume wheat, rice, *mandua*, jowar, *koni* and *madira*. Total cereal consumption is 796 g. per capita as against 400 g. normally required. Hard work and cold climate necessitate greater consumption of

cereals. Pulses consumed are soyabean, black gram and lentil, the per capita consumption being 50 g. only. The consumption of green vegetables is only 39 g. per capita as against the normal requirement of 114 g. About 10 g. per capita is the consumption of other vegetables, the normally required quantity being 85 g. per capita. Potato, radish and onion are consumed in comparatively larger quantities of about 56 g. per capita. Fruits (mangoes, plums and bananas) are consumed 23 g. per capita against the required normal quantity of 85 g. Ghee and oil are consumed in meagre quantities (15 g. per capita). The consumption of sugar and jaggery is 38 g. per capita as against 57 g. normally required. Honey is also used by a few. Milk and curd are consumed in every family, their consumption being 139 g. per capita. The consumption level of those who consume meat, fish and eggs is also far short of the normal quantities required. Diets are usually inadequate in animal protein, fat, vitamins and iron.



## CHAPTER XVII

### OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES

#### LABOUR WELFARE

The district of Pithoragarh falls in the Bareilly region, one of the seven regions of the U. P. labour commissioner's organisation, into which the State has been divided for the administration of labour laws and the implementation of labour welfare measures. The staff of the regional office at Bareilly consists of a regional assistant labour commissioner assisted by a regional conciliation officer, an additional regional conciliation officer (at Rampur), an assistant welfare officer (at Bareilly), two inspectors of factories (with headquarters at Bareilly), and 17 labour inspectors posted at the regional headquarters and in important industrial towns of the region. The administration of labour laws in the district of Pithoragarh is the responsibility of the labour inspector, Pilibhit, who also deals with industrial relations, the machinery for arbitration of disputes between industrial workers and employers, trade unions, social security, and welfare measures for employees. It is his responsibility to ensure that labour laws are properly implemented and prosecutions launched if they are contravened.

A brief account of the labour Acts in operation in the district follows :

**The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923**—This Act lays down that an employer is liable to pay compensation if personal injury is caused to a worker in an accident arising out of and in the course of employment and also if the worker contracts any disease mentioned in the Act. The deputy commissioner of the district is the ex officio compensation commissioner under the Act for determining the amount of compensation which may be payable under the Act to a workman or his dependants. The number of cases in which compensation was granted during the 5 years ending with 1965 was 12, and the total compensation paid amounted to Rs 22,140, the yearwise break-up being as under :

Year	Fatal cases	Temporary disablement	Compensation (in rupees)
	3	..	4,650
1962	3	..	5,400
1963	4	1	9,920
1964	1	..	2,100
1965	..	..	..

**The Indian Boilers' Act, 1923**—This Act makes provision for registration and inspection of boilers, and prohibits the use of un-registered or uncertified ones, and is applicable to the four boilers that are extant in the district.

**The Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926**—The Act provides for the registration of trade unions and empowers the trade union registrar, Kanpur, to inspect the working of the trade unions, to call for returns and to consider applications for registration or cancellation of the unions. An assistant trade union inspector keeps in touch with the only registered trade union of the district, the P. W. D. Gang Mazdoor Union which had a membership of 27 during 1964-65, and advises it when necessary. This is a corporate body which functions in the interest of its members and aims at furthering good relations between employer and employees. It also strives to improve the economic, moral, social and living conditions of the labourers and to ensure that fair wages, healthy living and working conditions, proper medical and educational facilities for their children, etc. are made available by the employers. There was no labour unrest in the district during the five years ending with 1965.

**The Payment of Wages Act, 1936**—This Act deals with the payment of wages to persons employed in factories and other establishments who earn below Rs 400 a month, fixes a time-limit for the payment of wages, from which no unauthorised deductions can be made, and is applicable to the Berinag Tea Estate, Pithoragarh, in this district.

#### OLD-AGE PENSIONS

The old-age pension scheme, which had already been in operation in the tahsil of Pithoragarh in February, 1960, regulates the provision (since April, 1964) of a pension of Rs 20 per month to old and destitute persons of 60 years (of age) and above, who have no means of subsistence or support. It is administered by the labour commissioner, U. P., Kanpur, the verification of age, income, etc., being done at the district level. The number of beneficiaries receiving such pension in the district on June 30, 1966, was 67, of which 32 were women, the tahsilwise break-up being as follows :

Tahsil	No. of beneficiaries		Total
	Men	Women	
Dharchula	1	6	7
Didihat	12	..	12
Mansyari	7	3	10
Pithoragarh	15	23	38



### PROHIBITION

Easy availability of intoxicants, lack of public co-operation in reporting infringements of the prohibition law, the reluctance of the public to appear as witnesses in courts of law against offenders and a sizeable percentage of the population being addicted to spirits due to higher altitudes, are some of the main difficulties encountered in the enforcement of total prohibition in the district.

A district temperance society, consisting of officials and non-officials was set up by the government in October, 1963, to discourage excessive indulgence in drinking. The district excise officer acted as its *ex officio* secretary and its activities were carried out through sub-committees, each with an honorary prohibition *pracharak* (preacher), who propagates prohibition through moral and religious pressure, persuasion and personal contact. Camps and stalls are set up in fairs and exhibitions for the publicity of prohibition, particularly at the Nanda Ashtmi fair in Martoli (in tahsil Mansyari) and the commercial fair at Jarajibli (in tahsil Dharchula) where prohibition is propagated through audio visual aids, viz., cinema slides, posters, placards, distribution of leaflets etc. Hoardings, depicting the disastrous effects of drugs and liquor have been set up at prominent places. There are also in the district the Arya Samaj and the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, which devote themselves to the promotion of temperance in particular and to prohibition in general. The local workers of the Sarvodaya movement also carry out temperance work in the district. Sincere efforts led to the closure of a country liquor shop at Thal in tahsil Didihat, situated near the Baleshwar temple, from April 1, 1966.

The quota system for the supply of liquor, under which excise licensees can obtain for sale, only a fixed quota of intoxicants, is applicable in the district. There is no sale of liquors and intoxicants on Tuesdays, other 'dry' days being Holi, Diwali, Independence Day, October 2 (the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi) and January 30 (the day of his assassination). The hours of sale and the quantity sold to an individual at a time is also restricted, in licensed retail shops. Sale of bhang, ganja and opium are banned in the district and breaches are punishable under the Opium Act, 1857, the U. P. Excise Act, 1910, and the Dangerous Drugs Act, 1930.

### ADVANCEMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES

A district Harijan and social welfare officer was appointed in January, 1966. He works under the administrative control of the deputy commissioner (as part of the co-ordinated planning scheme)

and publicises the provisions of the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955, besides doing other work relating to the welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes.

The educational facilities extended, include relaxation of the time and the upper age limits for admission to certain educational institutions, free tuition, stipends, scholarships and financial assistance for the purchase of books and stationery, besides providing free hostel facilities. During the Third Five-year Plan period 427 and 418 stipends were sanctioned for students of the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes, respectively, the amount disbursed being Rs 25,390 and Rs 15,464. Under a scheme sponsored by the Central Government, financial assistance was extended to 31 and 5 persons respectively among the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes and amounted to Rs 6,469 and Rs 864, respectively. Free accommodation is provided at village Bajeti Deolai (in tahsil Pithoragarh) for 20 students of these groups.

Apart from these educational facilities from the community development blocks, separate departmental grants are also made to enable these people to purchase live-stock, fertilisers and agricultural implements. During the Third Five-year Plan, a sum of Rs 5,490 was sanctioned to 30 farmers of the Scheduled Castes, and agricultural loans were also arranged for them. To augment their earnings, they are allowed to set up their own cottage industries such as spinning, weaving, tailoring, shoe-making, bee-keeping, smithy and poultry farming. During the Third Plan an amount of Rs 20,182 was given to 103 persons to develop village industries.

Similarly, a sum of Rs 47,584 was spent among 118 families to help them improve their living conditions during that period, and 118 new tenements were constructed during the same period besides 72 *diggis* (tanks) and nullahs at a cost of Rs 26,795 to provide drinking water facilities in localities where Harijans live in large numbers.

Over and above this sum, an amount of Rs 34,727 was also spent on similar works under schemes sponsored by the Central Government.

The organisations that work for the social, moral and economic uplift of the Scheduled Castes are the Harijan Sewak Sangh and the Harijan Charmakala Sangh (both at Pithoragarh), their main objective being the eradication of untouchability and other social evils existing among the masses. They also encourage people to join

kar Sabha, Almora, promotes literacy and also runs schools in the district which are recognised by the Antarim Zila Parishad, Pithoragarh.

#### CHARITABLE ENDOWMENTS

The Srimati Saraswati Bist Scholarship Endowment Trust, Pithoragarh, founded by Thakur Dan Singh Bist on October 24, 1949, is the only trust in the district, the amount invested in it yielding an annual income of Rs 708.54. It is an educational trust and awards scholarships to sons and daughters of residents of Pithoragarh who were killed in action in World War II, and to deserving students of the Sri Sarswati Deb Singh Higher Secondary School, Pithoragarh.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### PUBLIC LIFE AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

#### REPRESENTATION OF DISTRICT IN LEGISLATURES

##### Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly)

At the time of the general elections of 1952, the area covered by the district formed part of Almora district and was included in the Pithoragarh-cum-Champawat legislative assembly constituency which was a double-member constituency, one of the two seats being reserved for members of the Scheduled Castes. Eight candidates contested the elections of whom three were Independants, two belonged to the Indian National Congress and two to the Socialist party and one was put up by the Kisan Mazdoor Praja party. Both the seats were won by the Congress.

In the general elections of 1957 the district was included in the Pithoragarh legislative assembly constituency of the Almora district. The number of seats and their allotment from this constituency remained unchanged but this time there were only four candidates in the field of whom two belonged to the Congress and two were set up by the Praja Socialist party. In this election, too, both the seats were won by the Congress.

For the general elections of 1962, the constituencies had been delimited in 1961 and Pithoragarh, which was then a separate district was divided into two single-member constituencies—Pithoragarh and Champawat. The greater part of the district of Pithoragarh came under the Pithoragarh constituency and the Champawat constituency covered the Champawat tahsil (of Almora district) and some portion of the Pithoragarh district. The seat in the Champawat constituency was reserved for the Scheduled Castes candidate. Seven candidates contested the election from both these constituencies of whom two each belonged to the Congress and the Praja Socialist party. One candidate was an Independent, one belonged to Socialist party and one to the Akhil Bhartiya Jan Sangh. Both the seats were again won by the Congress.

In 1952, the number of electors in the constituency concerned was 1,51,600, the number of votes actually cast was 66,219 and the total



number of valid votes polled was 62,599. In the general elections of 1957 and 1962, the electors numbered 1,54,130 and 1,61,207, the total votes actually cast were 47,153 and 34,136 and valid votes polled were 44,792 and 32,360, respectively.

The following statement shows the numbers and percentages of votes polled for each party and the number of seats contested and won by it in the Vidhan Sabha constituencies from the district (including Champawat tahsil of Almora district) :

Party/ Independants	1952				1957			
	Contest- ants	Seats won	Valid votes polled	Per- centage	Contest- ants	Seats won	Valid votes polled	Per- centage
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Congress	2	2	33,351	53.30	2	2	28,915	60.09
Independants	3	..	15,558	24.80	..	..	..	..
Jan Sangh	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party	1	..	2,561	4.10	..	..	..	..
Praja Socialist Party	..	..	..	..	2	..	17,877	39.91
Socialist Party	2	..	11,129	17.80	..	..	..	..
Total	8	2	62,599	100.00	4	2	44,792	100.00

1962				
Party/Independants	Contestants	Seats won	Valid votes polled	Percentage
1	10	11	12	13
Congress ..	..	2	15,217	47.03
Independants	1	..	3,453	10.67
Jan Sangh ..	..	1	673	2.07
Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party	..	..	..	..
Praja Socialist Party	..	2	12,041	37.21
Socialist Party	..	1	976	3.02
Total ..	..	7	32,360	100.00

#### Vidhan Parishad (Legislative Council)

No member has been returned for the Vidhan Parishad of Uttar Pradesh from the region covered by the district of Pithoragarh so far.



**Pithoragarh City—A View**

**Lok Sabha (House of the People)**

In the general elections of 1952, the district formed part of the Almora Parliamentary constituency. Three candidates contested the election from this constituency and the seat went to the Congress candidate.

In the general elections of 1957 only two candidates, of whom one belonged to the Praja Socialist Party and the other to the Congress, contested the election from the Almora Parliamentary constituency and the seat was won by the Congress candidate.

In the general elections of 1962, the number of contestants from the Almora Parliamentary constituency rose to four of whom one candidate each was put up by the Congress, the Jan Sangh and the Praja Socialist Party and one contested the election as an Independent. The Congress candidate won the seat.

The following statement shows the numbers and percentages of valid votes polled by each party and number of seats contested and won by it from the Almora Parliamentary constituency which covered the districts of Almora and Pithoragarh :

Party/ Independants	1952				1957			
	Contes- tants	Seats won	Valid votes polled	Per- centage	Contest- ants	Seats won	Valid votes polled	Per- centage
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Congress	1	1	54,264	54.4	1	1	49,549	55.07
Independants	1	..	21,534	21.4	..	..	..	..
Jan Sangh	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Praja Socialist Party	..	..	..	..	1	..	40,422	44.93
Socialist Party	1	..	24,169	24.2	..	..	..	..

Party/Independants	1962			
	Contestants	Seats won	Valid votes polled	Percentage
1	10	11	12	13
Congress	1	1	51,507	48.82
Independants	1	..	17,805	16.88
Jan Sangh	1	..	24,509	13.23
Praja Socialist Party	1	..	11,680	11.07
Socialist Party	..	..	..	..



### Rajya Sabha (Council of States)

No person belonging to the district of Pithoragarh has so far been returned as a member of the Rajya Sabha.

### Political Parties

The political parties active in the district belong to all-India or State level organisations, none being of purely local standing. Their numerical strength varies from time to time. The Indian National Congress was the only party which contested all the three general elections in the district, those of 1952 and 1962 also being contested by the Socialist party and those of 1957 and 1962 by the Praja Socialist party. The parties which contested only one of these elections were the Kisan Mazdoor Praja party (in 1952) and the Aklil Bhartiya Jan Sangh (in 1962).

### NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

**Hindi**—*Uttarakhand Jyoti*, a weekly newspaper is being published from the district since 1960 and has a circulation of about 2,000 copies.

**Other Periodicals**—About 40 newspapers and periodicals published outside the district find their way into this district. The more popular of the Hindi dailies are *Hindustan* and *Nav Bharat Times*. The Hindi magazines, *Dharmyug*, *Saptahik Hindustan*, *Sarika*, *Narneet*, *Sarita*, *Kadambini*, *Madhuri*, *Nai Kahaniyan* and *Parag* are also popular in the district. The Urdu dailies usually read in the district are *Milap* and *Qaymi Awaz*. Among the English dailies read here are the *Statesman*, *National Herald*, *The Pioneer*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Times of India* and *The Northern India Patrika*. The English weeklies read are the *Blitz*, the *Link* and the *Illustrated Weekly of India*; the English fortnightlies are the *Filmfare* and the *Caravan* and the English monthlies are the *Imprint*, the *Mirror*, the *Reader's Digest* and the *Mother India*.

### VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

There are a number of voluntary social service organisations in the district for looking after certain social and economic needs of the people in general and the special needs of the socially neglected in particular.

In the past, such institutions depended mostly on the philanthropy and zeal of the people of the district, but with the posting, to the district, in January, 1966, of the district Harijan and social welfare officer, efforts have been made to strengthen these organisations



and to co-ordinate their activities with those of governmental institutions in the field. This officer supervises the working of institutions, run by the State, and implements the various social welfare schemes initiated by his department.

A brief account of the more important of the voluntary social service organisations in the district is given below :

### **Institutions for Community Welfare**

The Bharat Sewak Samaj endeavours to find and develop avenues of voluntary service for those who are prepared to do such work, to promote their advancement and mitigate the privation and hardships of those who are socially and economically backward. It works on a non-political basis and organises camps for youths, teachers and students for rendering *shramdan* (voluntary labour) in order to execute public utility works.

There are 134 Yuvak Mangal Dals in the district with a membership of 3,864. Organisations of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and the Temperance Society are also functioning in the district.

### **Institutions for Women's Welfare**

A Mahila Ashram established by Sher Singh Karki and Lilavati (a Sarvodaya worker) is functioning at village Muwain since 1963. Its main object is to provide shelter to widows and destitute women and to rehabilitate them. The number of inmates has never exceeded 12. At times, it receives aid from the government for different purposes. Several Mahila Mangal Dals are also functioning in the district.

### **Institutions for Child and Youth Welfare**

A Bal Kalyan Parishad for the welfare of children has been organised under the chairmanship of the district magistrate. For the help of Harijan boys, four Junior Basic schools and a boarding house are functioning under the supervision of the district Harijan and social welfare officer.

A sports council has been established in the district, which arranges and encourages tournaments and games and imparts training in different indigenous and modern sports to youngmen and others interested in them. The Prantiya Rakshak Dal organises activities relating to sports, agriculture, horticulture and other spheres of youth welfare. It also arranges monthly sittings of Yuvak Mangal Dals.

## CHAPTER XIX

### PLACES OF INTEREST

#### **Askot (pargana Askot, tahsil Didihat)**

The name, Askot, is said to be a corruption of 'Assikot' meaning eighty forts. A large village, it was the seat of the Rajwars, the former owners of pargana Askot, who followed the rule of primogeniture. The ruling family is said to have been a branch of the old royal house of Katyur. On the break up of the Katyuri kingdom one branch of the family led by Abhai Pal settled in Askot about 1279 A. D. He established a small principality which remained under his successors almost till about the beginning of the present century.

The village is surrounded by hills and the ridges fringing the Kali river are clothed with fine stretches of pine, *shisham*, sal, *khair* and oak forests.

#### **Berinag (pargana Gangoli, tahsil Didihat)**

The place derives its name from the temple of Berinag (a local deity) which is said to be as old as the village itself. At a small distance lies the village of Garaun where there is a 46 m. high waterfall.

An expert committee was appointed (1827) to investigate the possibility of the successful cultivation of tea in Kumaon and a tea estate was set up here in the fifties of the last century. The manager of the Berinag tea company happened to discover the secret of manufacture of Chinese brick tea and his tea was considered to be far superior to the Chinese variety. In 1907, he disposed of about 54 quintals of it but gradually the business declined and by 1960 only a small tea garden had survived.

Berinag is also a popular market where, people from neighbouring villages, come to purchase articles of daily use. Two fairs are held here in Sravana (July-August), one on Amavasya and the other on Naga Panchami day.

#### **Dharchula (pargana Askot, tahsil Dharchula)**

The tahsil headquarters (of the same name) is said to have derived its name from *dhar* which in local dialect means peak and *chula* (cooking fire). Tradition has it that Vyasa, the famous sage, cooked his food here.

Making of handwoven and handspun woollen clothes by local inhabitants is the main industry. The industries department has started a centre here which prepares a variety of refined woollen articles. The place developed into a township after the formation of the district of Pithoragarh in 1930. The subdivisional magistrate's residence and court were built in 1935-36. During winter, most of the residents of the upper Byans migrate to this place.

**Didihat (pargana Sira, tahsil Didihat)**

Didihat has been the headquarters since 1960, of the tahsil of the same name.

Before the formation of the district the place was known as Digtar which was simply a halting place on the way to Kailash. The name Didihat appears to have been derived from the villages Digtar and Hat.

Near the place are also found the remains of a fort, Sherakot, which is said to have been built by a Gorkha king, who ruled here and who was later conquered by Puru Pant. Being on the top of a hill, Sherakot presents a wide and beautiful view of the Himalayas. Adjacent to the fort there is an old and renowned temple of Malayanath, dedicated to Siva, which is visited by persons from places far and near. Fairs, attended by about 1,000 persons, are held at the temple on the occasions of Rakshabandhan and Sivaratri when goats are sometimes sacrificed.

About 8 km. from the place, there is Narain Nagar, a small but attractive locality, founded by one Narain Swami. It has a temple, dedicated to the deity of Narayana.

**Gangolihat (pargana Gangoli, tahsil Pithoragarh)**

The village derives its name from Gangoli, the name of the pargana and Hat, a name by which the place is locally called. It has a temple of Mahakali, which is said to be of great antiquity and is situated in the midst of a dense deodar forest. It is alleged that during the reign of the Chand rajas, human beings were, at times, offered in sacrifice at this temple, but the practice was stopped in the last century. Goats and buffaloes still continue to be sacrificed, particularly during the Navaratri of Chaitra and Asvina. The place also has the remains of a small fort built by a regent of the Chand rajas. In *patti* Bherang, about 8 km.

from the village, there is an ancient temple of Patal Bhubaneshtar, dedicated to Siva, which is located inside a long and dark tunnel and attracts a large number of devotees.

### **Jarajibli (pargana Askot, tahsil Dharchula)**

The name Jarajibli (commonly known as Jauljibi) is said to have been derived from two words—*jaul* (confluence) and, *jibi* (tongue), a narrow strip of land, resembling a tongue, in between the two rivers, the Gori and the Kali.

A little above the confluence stands the temple of Mahadeva in a thick grove of mango and other trees. Opposite the temple is a dharamsala (constructed by the rani of Askot in 1944) from where there is a fine view of the confluence of these two rivers.

The place is famous for its *ringal* and woodwork (called *nigala*) and has a spinning and weaving centre. A commercial fair (attended by about 10,000 persons) is held at Jarajibli at the time of Brischik Sankranti in November, the practice being said to have been started by the Rajwars of Askot.

### **Milam (pargana Johar, tahsil Mansyari)**

Milam is a village which lies in a region covered by lofty snow mountains where the rocks are of varied colours. Waterfalls are numerous and many of them are of great beauty.

Some distance up the glen of the Gori river, above Milam, is the Shangchu Kund, a small sheet of greenish water held in great repute as a place of pilgrimage.

Milam is inhabited from June to October and entirely deserted during the rest of the year due to severe cold. In the past it was the biggest migratory village in these parts and a central place for Malla Johar.

### **Mansyari (pargana Johar, tahsil Mansyari)**

Mansyari, the tahsil headquarters, stands on the right bank of the Gori river. Formerly it was also known as Ranthi, the subdivisional and tahsil headquarters being situated at a place called Tiksen. It is cold in winter but very pleasant in summer.

Mansyari is one of the most important manufacturing centres for *thulmas* (large rugs), sheep rearing being the chief occupation of the people.



**Pithoragarh (pargana Shor, tahsil Pithoragarh)**

During the period of the Chand rajas, Piru, *alias*, Prithvi Gosain, constructed a fort which came to be called Pithoragarh and is said to have given its name to the town and later to the district. The town had two forts one of which has been demolished, its place being taken by the Government Girls' Intermediate College building. The building of the other fort houses the treasury and the tahsil.

Pithoragarh is a small town, which gives its name to the district. It lies in the centre of the western half of the Shor valley which resembles the Kashmir valley on a miniature scale. It is prettily dotted with villages, generally placed on eminences. The view from Pithoragarh is very fine as all the peaks of Panch Chulhi, Nanda Devi and Nanda Kot are visible from high spots in the town.

About 5 km. from the place there is a small and beautiful place named Chandag which houses an asylum for lepers. It is said that a goddess killed two devils, Chand and Mund, at this place. The episode gave the place the name Chandghat, Chandag appearing to be its corrupt form.



## CONVERSION FACTORS

### Money

1 pie=0.52 paise

1 pice=1.56 paise

### Linear Measure

1 inch=2.54 centimetres

1 foot=30.48 centimetres

1 yard=91.44 centimetres

1 mile=1.61 kilometres

### Square Measure

1 square foot=0.093 square metre

1 square yard=0.836 square metre

1 square mile=2.59 sq. km. =259 hectares

1 acre=0.405 hectares

### Cubic Measure

1 cubic foot=0.028 cubic metre

### Measure of Capacity

1 gallon (Imperial)=4.55 litres

1 seer\* (80 tolas)=0.937 litre

### Measure of Weight

1 tola =11.66 grams

1 *chhatak*=58.32 grams

1 seer\*=933.10 grams

1 maund=37.32 kilograms

1 ounce (Avoirdupois)=28.35 grams

1 pound (Avoirdupois)=453.59 grams

1 hundredweight=50.80 kilograms

1 ton=1,016.05 kilograms=1.016 metric tonnes

### Thermometer Scale

1 Fahrenheit= $9/5^{\circ}$  Centigrade+32

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\*As defined in the Indian Standards of Weight Act, 1939





## GLOSSARY

**Dai**—Midwife (not diplomaed)  
**Faujdar**—Subordinate military officer under Mughals  
**Ganth**—Charitable endowment in hills  
**Hawalat**—Place where under-trial prisoners are kept  
**Kanungo**—A petty revenue official  
**Khandsari**—Indigenous white sugar  
**Moharrir**—Clerk  
**Munsif**—Judge  
**Mutthi**—A measure of land, equal to 15 sq. yards  
**Naiib**—Deputy, assistant  
**Nali**—Measure of land, equal to 240 sq. yards  
**Nayabad**—Newly cultivated land  
**Patti**—Group of villages in hills, a revenue circle  
**Patwari**—A petty revenue official, *lekhpal*  
**Sadabart**—Charitable endowment  
**Tirthankara**—In Jainism, expounder of religion, deified hero or saint  
**Vaid**—Practitioner of Ayurvedic system of medicine

### Latin names of trees, animals birds, etc.

#### Trees :

**Banj**—*Quercus incana*  
**Bel**—*Aegle marmelos*  
**Bhurjapatra (Bhojpatra)**—*Betula utilis*  
**Chir**—*Pinus longifolia*  
**Deodar**—*Cedrus deodara*  
**Kail**—*Pinus excelsa*  
**Khair**—*Accacia catechu*  
**Kharasu**—*Quercus semecarifolia*  
**Kharik**—*Acer calsum/Celtis australis*  
**Pangar**—*Aesculus species*  
**Sal**—*Shorea robusta*  
**Shisham**—*Dalbergia sissoo*  
**Tilonj**—*Quercus dialatata*  
**Tun**—*Cedrella toona*

#### Animals :

**Sarau**—*Capricornis sumatraensis*  
**Thar**—*Hemitragus jemlahicus*

#### Reptile :

**Dhaman**—*Ptyas mucosus*

#### Birds :

**Chakor**—*Alectories graeca*  
**Chir**—*Catreus wallichii*  
**Kali**—*Lophura bucomelana*  
**Kokla**—*Pucrasia macrolopha*

#### Fish :

**Asela**—*Ophicephalus marulives*  
**Gunch**—*Bangerius varrellii*  
**Kalabans**—*Labeo calbasu*  
**Mahaseer**—*Brobis putitcr*  
**Rohu**—*Labeo rohita*



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